

**R E P O R T**  
OF  
**T H E C O M M I T T E E**  
OF  
**T H E S O C I E T Y**  
FOR THE  
**M I T I G A T I O N A N D G R A D U A L**  
**A B O L I T I O N O F S L A V E R Y**  
THROUGHOUT THE BRITISH DOMINIONS,  
READ AT  
THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY,  
*Held on the 25th day of JUNE 1824,*  
TOGETHER WITH  
**A N A C C O U N T**  
OF THE  
PROCEEDINGS WHICH TOOK PLACE AT THAT  
MEETING.

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**L O N D O N :**

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1824.

# ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

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# REPORT,

&c.

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**THE** Society for Mitigating and gradually Abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions held its first Meeting on the 31st January 1823, and soon after commenced its operations.

After a lapse of sixteen months, it seems incumbent on the Committee, to whom the conduct of its affairs was then delegated, to render to their constituents an account of the manner in which they have discharged their trust.

It will be proper to bring to the recollection of the Subscribers the precise objects for which the Society was instituted. They are clearly expressed in the following Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted at its first Meeting, viz.

“That the individuals composing the present Meeting are deeply impressed with the magnitude and number of the evils attached to the system of Slavery which prevails in many of the Colonies of Great Britain, a system which appears to be opposed to the spirit and precepts of Christianity, as well as repugnant to every dictate of natural humanity and justice.

“That they long indulged a hope, that the great measure of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, for which an Act of the Legislature was passed in 1807, after a struggle of twenty years, would have tended rapidly to the mitigation and gradual extinction of

Negro bondage in the British Colonies, but that in this hope they have been painfully disappointed; and after a lapse of sixteen years they have still to deplore the almost undiminished prevalence of the very evils which it was one great object of the Abolition to remedy.

“That under these circumstances they feel themselves called upon by the most binding considerations of their duty as Christians, by their best sympathies as men, and by their solicitude to maintain unimpaired the high reputation and the solid prosperity of their country, to exert themselves, in their separate and collective capacity, in furthering this most important object, and in endeavouring by all prudent and lawful means to mitigate and eventually to abolish the Slavery existing in our Colonial possessions.

“That an Association be now formed, to be called ‘The Society for Mitigating and gradually Abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions;’ and that a Subscription be entered into for that purpose.”

Your Committee having been appointed to carry these objects into effect, proceeded to diffuse, as widely as possible, information respecting the nature and effects of Colonial bondage. Mr. Wilberforce’s “Appeal in behalf of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies,” and Mr. Clarkson’s “Thoughts on the Necessity of Improving their Condition, with a view to Emancipation,” were circulated to a large extent. And it was a source of satisfaction to your Committee, that, in taking the field against Colonial Slavery, they were thus enabled to proceed under the conduct of the same veteran Champions who had first led the battle against the African Slave Trade, and who had pursued it to its final extinction. To these invaluable works were added various others, illustrative of the injustice and inhumanity, as well as the impolicy, of Colonial Slavery. The effect which they produced was considerable; and in a short time nume-

rous Petitions were addressed to Parliament from all parts of the country, praying for the gradual extinction of Negro bondage.

On the 15th May, 1823, the subject was brought before the House of Commons by Mr. Buxton; and after a long and interesting debate, which has been published by your Committee, the following Resolutions, proposed by Mr. Canning as an Amendment to Mr. Buxton's Motion, were unanimously adopted by the House, viz.

1st. "That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for meliorating the condition of the Slave Population in His Majesty's Colonies.

2nd. "That through a determined and persevering but judicious and temperate enforcement of such measures, this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the Slave Population, such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges, which are enjoyed by other classes of His Majesty's subjects.

3rd. "That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose, at the earliest period that may be compatible with the well-being of the Slaves, the safety of the Colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of all parties concerned therein.

4th. "That these Resolutions be laid before His Majesty."

As these Resolutions, thus proposed by Mr. Canning with the declared sanction of His Majesty's Government, and with the acquiescence also of the whole body of West Indians in Parliament, recognised explicitly the very principles on which your Committee proceeded, and pointed unambiguously to the very consummation at which they aimed; it was thought right by the Mover, and those who acted with him, to concur in adopting them; more especially as His Majesty's Ministers, in proposing to take the work of reform into their own hands, signified their intention of carrying into early effect many of the

specific measures of improvement which had been contemplated by your Committee.

In their Circular Address of August 1823, giving a detailed account of these proceedings, your Committee, while they expressed their satisfaction that the Government and Parliament should have so clearly recognised the principles embodied in these Resolutions, could not refrain at the same time from expressing their regret, that the proposed plans of reform, instead of being made the subject of Parliamentary enactment, should have been referred to the deliberation and decision of the Colonial Authorities. This circumstance tended greatly to damp the hopes which the favourable disposition of His Majesty's Ministers was calculated to inspire. Past experience seemed to discourage the hope of effectual co-operation, on the part of the Colonists, in any plan which had in view the termination of Slavery.

The Committee, therefore, as well as the advocates of their cause in Parliament, distinctly stated their apprehensions, that this mode of proceeding would lead only to delay and disappointment. They were of opinion, indeed, that in no way were the alarms on the subject of insurrection, which had been so industriously raised, more likely to be realized, than by submitting the meditated mitigations of the Slave system to discussion within the Colonies, instead of transmitting them thither in the shape of laws to be obeyed. And even if such a reference should produce no positive evil, they feared that it would at least be fruitless of any substantial good.

The event has seemed to justify these apprehensions. The instructions of His Majesty's Government on this subject to the Colonial Authorities, as contained in Lord Bathurst's circular letters of the 28th May and 9th July 1823, were framed in an unexceptionable spirit of moderation, and were directed to objects of the very highest importance; and had they been carried into effect, would have produced a most beneficial effect on the condition of the Slaves. These instructions, however, honourable as

they were to the Government, were met in some cases by refusal, and in others by menaces of resistance. In a few of the smaller Colonies, they have been treated with less of outward disrespect; and a disposition has even been professed to comply with His Lordship's suggestions; but your Committee have not heard that any legislative measures have yet been adopted for carrying them into effect. It is to be presumed, that had such laws been enacted, they would have been laid before Parliament without delay. The Slave Law of St. Vincent, passed in 1820, has been represented, indeed, as containing great improvements, and as having even anticipated most of Lord Bathurst's suggestions: but on examining it, this statement will be found to be altogether erroneous: it proves to be nearly a transcript of the last consolidated Slave Law of Jamaica; and, like that law, it leaves the great evils of the Colonial system untouched\*.

Even in those Colonies where the power of making laws is vested immediately and wholly in the Crown, the reforms proposed by His Majesty's Government, having been submitted to the previous consideration of the local authorities, experienced the same opposition and delay as in the Colonies possessing legislative Assemblies of their own.

It was no more than might have been expected, that while a chance remained of dissuading or deterring the Government from perseverance in its purposes of reform, the proprietors of Slaves filling offices in the Colonies would not be sparing of their objections, nor the White population in general of their clamours and alarms. And even if Governors or public bodies, acting in the Colonies, were perfectly well disposed to carry those reforms into effect, they would still find that the delegation of legislative power on topics so delicate was a burden hard to be sustained. An imperative order would relieve them from embarrassment; whilst a discretionary authority could not

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\* See for an account of the Consolidated Slave Law of Jamaica, the Appendix to the Debate of May 15, 1823, p. 148, &c.

be exercised, in opposition to local prejudices and passions, without sacrifices of a very painful kind.

The proceedings of popular Meetings in some of the Colonies, and the calamitous events in Demerara, too clearly illustrate the danger of such a mode of proceeding.

And while this danger was obvious, it seemed no less obvious, that if the supreme power of the State had at once authoritatively prescribed the course to be pursued, there would have been no ground to apprehend any inconvenient results. To suppose that the Slaves would rebel against the Government, because it had taken measures for alleviating the rigours of their condition, would be absurd and irrational. Was there any thing, for instance, in the gift of Sunday as a day of rest; or in the mitigation of corporal punishment; or in the removal of restraints on manumission; or in the admission of their evidence in Courts of Justice, which could have a tendency to promote discontent and insurrection among the Slaves?

Had the mode of authoritative enactment, therefore, been adopted, instead of that of mere recommendation, the probability appears to be, that the effect would have been submission on the part of the Planters, and gratitude on the part of the Slaves. The cause of the mischief which actually occurred in Demerara, though grossly misrepresented at first, is now clearly ascertained. The evidence on the trial of Mr. Smith the Missionary, and on that of the Slaves implicated in the insurrection, shows that the proximate cause of that unhappy event was the delay of the Colonial Authorities in giving publicity and effect to the measures of grace recommended by His Majesty's Government. The Slaves learnt that the supreme authority of the State had transmitted certain Regulations for their protection and comfort, the benefit of which they were led to apprehend was withheld from them by the opposition of their masters. The expected good was also, it may be presumed, magnified by the mist of secrecy in which it was enveloped. It was supposed by some to

be a gift of freedom, and the unfortunate men imagined that the oppression under which they groaned was no longer warranted by law.

On the whole, little doubt can now be entertained, that not only has much evil arisen from having submitted the proposed reforms in the Slave system to Colonial deliberation, but that no substantial good could reasonably have been expected, or is to be looked for in future, from such a course. In the Mother Country alone can laws on this subject be effectually, and at the same time safely, made.

To the whole of this reasoning, however, it has been speciously objected, that the mere enactment of laws by the Mother Country would not secure their execution in the Colonies; and that if the Colonists, to whom the execution must be confided, are decidedly adverse to their object, they must necessarily become as inoperative as the various meliorating Acts already passed by the Colonial Legislatures, and which, it has been admitted, have proved, from the first, little more than a dead letter.

The Committee are ready to admit, that, in existing circumstances, there is much force in this objection. If the administration of justice in the Colonies is to remain in its present state; if Governors, and Judges, and Fiscals, and Attorneys General, are to be still left to depend on the Planters for their salaries and emoluments; and if moreover many of those functionaries should be allowed to continue, as now, considerable Slave owners, and therefore swayed by the combined force of interest and prejudice to favour existing abuses, it must in that case be conceded, that the best laws are likely to prove useless.

In reply, however, to this very formidable argument against the legislative interposition of Parliament, it might easily be shown that there are many measures which Parliament might adopt, with a view to ameliorate the state of Slavery, which would not require, in order to give them effect, the concurrence of either Colonial Magistrates or Colonial Juries.

But the objection admits of a still more comprehensive

answer ; namely, that it is a part of the general plan of improvement which the Government contemplates, to reform the executive and judicial administration of the Colonies. The strong and decisive reasons which previously existed for rescuing Governors, Judges, and other public functionaries, from a state of dependence on the favour of Colonial Assemblies, and for excluding from those offices the proprietors of Slaves, have been amply confirmed and illustrated by the transactions of the past year. But when a salutary change shall have been effected in these important points of Colonial policy, there is no ground to apprehend that laws enacted by the British Parliament, and armed with proper sanctions, will not prove effectual to their object.

For many years it was a standing argument against the measure of abolishing the Slave Trade by an Act of Parliament, that it would be impossible to carry that Act into effect, in the Colonies, against the feelings and interests of the whole community. But the execution of the law was, in this instance, committed to the Vice-Admiralty Courts, which were wholly independent of the Colonial Authorities ; and West Indians not only do not deny that the law has been effectual, but they affirm that it has never been violated.

If then, on their own admission, it has been found possible, by the simple expedient of committing the execution of the law to independent tribunals, to give effect to a measure which was so universally obnoxious to the Colonists as the abolition of the Slave Trade, Parliament need not to be deterred from passing laws for the mitigation of Slavery, by a fear of their proving inoperative, while it has the power, by contemporaneous provisions, of giving to the Courts of Justice, and to the public functionaries, that independence which will go far to secure the due execution of its enactments, and without which no enactments can be of any use.

It has been contended, however, that the British Parliament has no right to interfere with the internal concerns

of the Colonies, at least of those which have Legislative Assemblies of their own. But even if the right of interference were not essential to the very notion of supremacy in the Parent State; if it were not expressly reserved to Parliament in the very declaratory Act which renounces the right of taxation; if it had not been acted upon in a multitude of instances, from the first formation of our Colonies down to the present time; and if it were not recognised by every Statesman and every Jurist, the reason and the moral necessity of the case would still be decisive. We give to the Slave owners a monopoly of our markets at an annual cost of at least a million and a half; and we employ our fleets and armies to keep their Slaves in subjection. We involve ourselves, therefore, directly as well as indirectly, in the guilt of every oppression which it requires force to maintain; and yet the Colonists would deny to this country the liberty of controlling and correcting the system-it thus upholds.

A threat, indeed, has been held out, that if Parliament should attempt to legislate for the Slaves, Jamaica would renounce her allegiance. But no one who is acquainted with the circumstances of that island, will consider such a threat as deserving of serious notice. Its execution might be shown to be absolutely impossible\*. It will be recollected, too, that threats of the same kind were as loudly uttered on former occasions, and that with the weak and timid they had their effect. They were employed to prevent the abolition of the Slave Trade. The moment, however, that that measure became the law of the land, the previous violence of the Colonists (those of Jamaica included) was hushed, and in a short time the current of feeling was so changed, that the Colonists and the Colonial Authorities seemed to vie with each other in applauding the very measure which they had so recently denounced, and even threatened to resist, as ruinous to their interests and destructive to their rights. The Committee do not allude to this rapid change of sen-

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\* See Note I, at the end of the Report.

timent and conduct for any purpose of reproach ; but they adduce it as an important fact, which affords strong ground to expect a similar result in the present case. The day, they trust, is not far distant when Slavery will find as few advocates within the British Dominions, as the Slave Trade finds at the present moment.

The efforts which have been made to introduce a reform of the Slave system, have been encountered on this, as on former occasions, by the most alarming anticipations of insurrection in the West Indies, which has been represented as the natural and necessary consequence, not merely of Parliamentary interference, but even of public discussion in this country, respecting the condition of the Slave. But what are the facts of the case ?

It will be recollected, that last year when the question of Slavery was first agitated in Parliament, its agitation was strongly objected to by the West Indians, both at home and abroad, on the ground of this apprehended danger. And yet so little were the Colonists themselves affected by the consideration, that their own newspapers, over the conduct of which they possess a complete controul, have ever since been filled with the most violent declamations on the subject. Those very discussions, which, when they took place in this country, were denounced as sure to produce the most disastrous results in the West Indies, have been uniformly republished and circulated in the newspapers of the different Colonies, although these are the only sources of intelligence which commonly meet the eye even of the White population, or to which the other classes, whether free or Slaves, who can read, have access. Nay, the instructions of Earl Bathurst himself, which embodied the proposed reforms of the Slave system almost in the form of a Mandate from His Majesty, were published at length in the Colonial Journals, accompanied by acrimonious and inflammatory comments, and, in some cases, by an avowal, on the part of the Planters, of a determination to resist to the utmost the benevolent intentions of the King and the Parliament towards their Slaves. And these various inflammatory

publications took place in the West Indies, long before the specific nature of Lord Bathurst's instructions was known either to your Committee or to the British public, to whom they were first communicated through the medium of the Colonial press. It is surely too much, then, for the West Indians, under such circumstances, to object to the public discussion of Slavery in England, as pregnant with danger to the peace of the Colonies. For if there was any ground for the apprehensions of danger which they profess to entertain, it is too obvious a conclusion to have been overlooked by them, that that danger was immeasurably enhanced by transferring the same discussion, only conducted in a far more vehement and inflammatory style, to the very region and atmosphere of Slavery. The mischief in question also, if mischief there were, was in this case incurred without any rational object. In this country public discussion is necessary; for how otherwise is the public attention to be engaged, or the expression of the national sentiment to be called forth? How are even the Ministers of the Crown themselves to be enabled to pursue their own liberal views on this great subject,—beset as they are by the solicitations and remonstrances of Colonial Proprietors and their adherents, powerful in Parliamentary influence, and acting with concert and perseverance,—if the friends of reformation are to be silent, and to depend on the moral strength of their case alone, unaided by the public voice? This less obtrusive course had been pursued for many years prior to the formation of this Society; and what was the result? What was done for the unfortunate Slaves, subsequently to the abolition of the Slave Trade, in any of the Colonies, even in those in which the whole legislative power rested with the Crown? Shall we then pronounce public discussion in this country to be unnecessary?

In the Colonies, however, no similar necessity for public discussion, through the medium of the press, can be alleged to exist. There no difference of opinion appears to be entertained on this subject; none at least dares to

show itself. The Planters resident in the Colonies seem all agreed that Slavery ought to be maintained for ever. To agitate the question *there* is, therefore, most needlessly and gratuitously to provoke the evil they affect to dread. At least, while they thus act, they ought not to tell us, at the same moment, that by agitating the subject at the distance of four or five thousand miles, we are exciting insurrection, conflagration, and massacre.

Besides, if the events passing at so great a distance were likely to produce an injurious effect on the slaves, for example, of Jamaica, how has it happened that the existence of Hayti, almost within their view, should have hitherto exercised no perceptible influence upon them? Such a result might fairly have been anticipated; and yet it does not appear that the vicinity of Hayti, with all its insurrectionary lessons, (whatever the recent ceaseless and vehement agitation of the question of Slavery in the Colonial Journals may have effected,) has ever produced any material sensation among the Slaves. It is therefore obviously going too far, to represent mere discussion in this country as calculated to endanger the public tranquillity and to excite insurrection among them.

But we are told that plots and seditious conspiracies have occurred in Jamaica; and that these have proceeded from the rash and misdirected efforts of this Society. But, not to mention the exaggeration to which fear, even when honest, almost always gives rise, and which is sure to be increased when, as in the present case, interest, passion and prejudice add their united influence; it may safely be affirmed that, in every case where plots and conspiracies have really occurred in that island, it would be much more rational to ascribe them to the inflammatory publications of the Colonial Journalists, to the intemperance of the Parochial Meetings, and to the loudly avowed determination of the Planters not to act on the recommendation of His Majesty's Government for improving the condition of their Slaves, than to the proceedings of a Society of which the Slaves could not know

any thing but through channels wholly under the controul of their masters.

In point of fact, however, the Committee have as yet seen nothing to convince them that any such evils have occurred in Jamaica. Ten or twelve Slaves, indeed, have been tried and executed in that island as conspirators against its peace. But your Committee are not aware that any one *overt* act of rebellion has ever been proved, or has even been alleged to have taken place there.

Some persons of colour, subjects of His Majesty, have also been seized and forcibly transported from the island as conspirators, without a trial, and without the specification of any offence. These men, born in Jamaica, and possessing property there, were forcibly torn from their wives and families, and exiled as felons, without any adequate cause being assigned for this outrage. They have since made their way to England, and are at this moment seeking redress for their wrongs, and the reparation of their ruined fortunes.

As for the rumoured conspiracies in other islands, namely, in St. Lucia, Trinidad, and Dominica, there has not only occurred no act of violence to justify the belief of them, but there has not even occurred, as in Jamaica, the trial or condemnation of a single Slave for entertaining rebellious purposes, or for that crime peculiar to the West-India Statute Book, of "imagining the death of a White man."

No political manœuvre, however, is more easy or safe than pretences of plots in societies like those of the West Indies. During every period of the Slave Trade controversy, they were resorted to as convenient means of defence against the proposed abolition of that traffic. It would have been strange, therefore, if there had been any dearth of them at a time when such alarms were likely to be regarded as the best expedient to avert the deprecated reformation of a system in which almost all the Colonists supposed their interests as well as their character to be more or less involved.

One conspiracy, indeed, though of a most shallow and inartificial texture, appears to have been actually formed, and one insurrection has most calamitously taken place, namely, that of which the public has heard so much,—the revolt of the Slaves in Demerara. In that Colony there were some peculiar predisposing causes to such an event, arising from the pre-eminent harshness of the Slave system prevailing there, and from the religious persecutions to which, in addition to all their other sufferings, many of the Slaves were subjected in the course of the last year. While the irritation produced by this state of things was at its height, the Negroes learnt that His Majesty had instructed the Colonial Government to adopt certain measures for alleviating the rigours of their condition. Instead of experiencing, however, the expected alleviations, there is reason to fear that they found the hardship of their state rather increased than diminished. However this may have been, it was natural that they should be anxious to obtain clearer information on a subject which to them was of extreme importance. It seems to have been chiefly with this view that, on the 18th of August 1823, the Slaves of a particular district agreed to strike work; and, in order to secure themselves against the vigorous measures of repression which they reasonably anticipated, they forcibly seized such arms as they could procure on the plantations, and confined in the stocks several managers and overseers. The arms, however, appear to have been seized chiefly to prevent their being turned against themselves; and it is the testimony of Governor Murray himself, writing on the 26th of August 1823, when affairs had already assumed a “peaceable aspect,” that he had “not heard of any Whites having been deliberately murdered by the misguided Slaves.” On one plantation where the Whites resisted, two of them were killed. But it does not appear that, except in this instance, the insurgents took the life of a single individual, or that they demolished a single house, or set fire to a single cane piece.

And even in the excepted case which has been mentioned, the Committee are credibly informed that several of the insurgents were killed by shots from the house before they returned the fire, and that when they had succeeded in entering the house, they spared the lives of the master and mistress, who fell into their hands, (the latter of whom had been slightly wounded,) and did not afterwards inflict on them the slightest personal hurt.

Here, then, we have a servile insurrection, divested of almost all those acts of rapine and bloodshed by which such events have usually been characterized; an insurrection much more analogous to those tumults which occasionally occur among workmen in this country, when they conceive themselves to have been aggrieved by their employers, than to a traitorous conspiracy or rebellion of Slaves.

The case, however, was otherwise viewed in Demerara. Notwithstanding the moderation and forbearance, previously unexampled, with which the refractory Slaves conducted themselves, seeking neither to take away life nor to destroy property, their insubordination was visited with a tremendous vengeance. How many hundreds were slaughtered without resistance in the field, or hunted down by the Indians, who were called in to pursue them in their flight into the woods and swamps; how many on being taken were shot without the ceremony of a trial, or have since been executed by the sentence of Courts Martial; and how many more have had the flesh torn from their quivering limbs by cruel whippings, to the extent even of a thousand lashes, we have not accurately heard. But if the irregular proceedings and refractory conduct of the Slaves in this instance; if their impatience to know what were those alleviations of their condition which the reported benevolence of their Sovereign really designed for them; could only have been expiated by such a prodigality of blood, what can we imagine would have been the nature and extent of the punishments to which they would have been subjected, had

they added to the crime of insubordination those of conflagration and massacre?

The limits of a Report will not allow the Committee to dwell on the circumstances attending the trials of those unhappy persons: they appear to them to have been conducted with an extraordinary disregard of the customary forms of judicial proceeding. The public, however, has a fair opportunity of appreciating the spirit in which justice was likely to be administered to these Slaves, by the ample details published respecting another trial, that of Mr. Smith, the Missionary, upon which such a flood of light has been thrown by the recent discussions in the House of Commons. In the case of that deeply injured individual, who, as a White man, came within the pale of Colonial privilege, every recognised principle of law and justice was grossly and openly violated. And if, in his case, which it must have been known would attract considerable notice as well as excite deep interest in this country, and in which a man of talents and information, aided, for a part at least of his trial, by Counsel, had to defend himself from charges utterly groundless; if, in such a case, all those principles have been so palpably and flagrantly outraged; what measure of fairness and impartiality was to be expected in the case of wretched and ignorant Slaves, standing pinioned before their judges, unacquainted with the English language, uninformed of the specific charges against them until they were placed at the bar, and wholly unaided by legal advice? This is indeed a most affecting consideration.

It is obviously impossible for the Committee, in this Report, to enter into an exposition of Mr. Smith's case; nor is it now necessary. It is one, the enormity of which early riveted the public attention, and which, having been brought under the consideration of Parliament by an honourable gentleman, Mr. Brougham, one of the Vice Presidents of this Society, eminently qualified to exhibit its real nature, has produced throughout the coun-

try one concurrent sentiment of indignation and abhorrence. It would be vain for the Committee even to attempt to pay to that distinguished Senator, and to his honoured associates in the task of vindicating the fame of this traduced and persecuted Missionary, the tribute of praise to which they are entitled. Their efforts will live in the hearts of a grateful people, who have to count it among the blessings of the highest order with which Providence has crowned their lot, that they number among them men, so richly endowed, who are willing to devote their superior powers and attainments to expose oppression, and to vindicate in every corner of the British Empire the reign of law and justice and humanity.

The Committee cannot, however, entirely quit this subject without marking in the strongest manner the detestation they feel, in common with the community at large, of the cruelty and injustice of which that excellent individual Mr. Smith has been the victim; and expressing also their deep and cordial sympathy with his afflicted widow, for whose benefit they trust that an ample Subscription will be raised by the public.

It would be unpardonable not to add a tribute of applause to one most respectable and meritorious Colonist of Demerara, the Rev. Mr. Austin, a Clergyman of the Church of England, who, though connected with the Government as its Chaplain, and employed by it on a Commission of Inquiry, one main object of which was to find matter of inculpation against Mr. Smith, was so far from lending himself to the work of persecution that, becoming convinced of the innocence of that devoted Missionary, he fearlessly gave an upright and honourable testimony in his favour; and afterwards, with singular courage and generosity, opposed himself to a torrent of popular rage and prejudice, in order to prevent, by the avowal of his undisguised opinion, the effusion of innocent blood.

In these transactions, and in others which have occurred elsewhere, your Committee have the pain to recognise not merely a disregard of the ordinary rules of law and

of the principles of justice, but a spirit hostile to the amelioration and improvement of the condition of the Negro population, and especially to their religious instruction.

This spirit has, if possible, been still more strongly marked in the island of Barbadoes than even in Demerara itself. Your Committee here allude to the shameful outrages and persecutions which the Methodist Missionary, Mr. Shrewsbury, experienced at the hands of the White population of that island, and which are likely to become the subject of parliamentary investigation.

The circumstances which have been alluded to have certainly tended to damp still more the hope of any effectual concurrence on the part of the West Indian Assemblies, or other Colonial bodies, in the work of reformation. The Committee are most happy at the same time to be able to point out many exceptions to this too prevalent disposition. Many individual proprietors, as well as some of the Colonial Assemblies, seem actuated by a different spirit, in regard to religious instruction, from the inhabitants of Demerara and Barbadoes; and the desire to impart the blessings of Christianity to their Slaves appears to be extending itself among them. May it increase more and more, and may its effects be more generally manifested!

Your Committee will now proceed to lay before the Meeting the proceedings which have taken place in Parliament on this momentous subject during the present Session.

The following reference was made to it in His Majesty's Speech at the opening of the Session:

"His Majesty has commanded us to acquaint you that he has not been inattentive to the desire expressed by the House of Commons in the last Session of Parliament, that means should be devised for ameliorating the condition of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies.

"His Majesty has directed the necessary information relating to this subject to be laid before you.

"His Majesty is confident that you will afford your

best attention and assistance to any proposition which may be submitted to you for promoting the moral improvement of the Negroes, by an extended plan of religious instruction, and by such other measures as may gradually conduce to the same end.

“ But His Majesty earnestly recommends to you, to treat the whole subject with the calmness and the discretion which it demands.

“ It is a subject perplexed with difficulties which no sudden effort can disentangle.

“ To excite exaggerated expectations in those who are the objects of your benevolence, would be as fatal to their welfare as to that of their employers ; and His Majesty assures himself you will bear in mind that, in the correction of a long-standing and complicated system, in which the fortunes and the safety of large classes of His Majesty's subjects are involved, that course of proceeding is alone likely to attain practical good, and to avoid aggravation of evil, in which due regard shall be paid to considerations of justice, and in which caution shall temper zeal.”

On the 16th of March the papers alluded to in the King's Speech were laid before Parliament ; and on that day Mr. Canning in the House of Commons, and Lord Bathurst in the House of Lords, delivered a detailed statement respecting the proceedings and intentions of Government on the subject of Colonial Slavery. An Order of the King in Council was laid upon the table, prescribing various measures of reform which it had been determined to institute, with as little delay as possible, in the island of Trinidad. As it is professedly the model by which all ulterior measures of Colonial reform are to be regulated, it would have become the duty of your Committee to examine at length the nature and effects of the various provisions of this Order in Council, if the present occasion would have admitted of their doing so. But although the details of this examination must of necessity be reserved for another opportunity, the Committee

would now briefly state that the proposed regulations appear to them to be founded on right principles, and to constitute important practical improvements of the existing system ; not, however, without many defects, which the Committee hope may, on a proper representation of the case, be remedied. In the mean time it is satisfactory to remark the unequivocal admission of the general correctness of the statements, promulgated by the Committee on the subject of Slavery, which this measure implies. Upwards of a year of strenuous controversy has passed since the system of colonial bondage was brought into discussion in Parliament. Every assertion which the opponents of that system ventured to make, has been keenly contested. The King's Ministers have had the opportunity of weighing the conflicting testimony of the adverse parties, as well as of ascertaining, by official investigations, the true state of the case ; and though they have pronounced no express decision on the various points in controversy, they have adopted resolutions, and issued orders and instructions, which virtually admit the existence of most of the evils with which the system was charged.

If the Reforms, however, prescribed by this Order in Council were confined to Trinidad, not more than about a fortieth part of the Slave population in the British dominions would be benefited. But it is the declared intention of His Majesty's Ministers to extend the same system to St. Lucie, Demerara, Berbice, and the Mauritius ; and also, as far as it has not been already anticipated, to the Cape of Good Hope. These six Colonies comprehend a population of about 220,000 Slaves. But even after these have become the subjects of this amended system, there will still remain about 600,000 Slaves, residing in Colonies which have local legislatures, whom the proposed reforms by Royal Authority will not reach. It seems to be the present purpose of His Majesty's Government to proceed with these Colonies in the way of recommendation and example. The Trinidad Order in

Council is to be presented to them as a model for their imitation, and they are to be invited to copy it. When the Committee, however, look back to the history of the last 36 years, or even to the transactions of the last 12 months, they find it difficult to indulge a hope that the Assemblies will accede, in any effectual way, to such improvements as these; or that they will concur in such further measures for the gradual abolition of Slavery itself, as His Majesty's Ministers have it in contemplation hereafter to adopt. Indeed it cannot be expected that the Colonists should willingly promote an end which they continue loudly and peremptorily to declare to be absolute ruin to all their interests. And certainly the success which they seem to think, though we believe on no just ground, has attended their clamours, is not likely to check, but rather to encourage, that spirit of resistance which they have manifested, and which nothing but a fear of incurring the displeasure of Parliament, and calling into action its compulsory powers, is likely effectually to restrain.

What measures His Majesty's Government will adopt in case of that continued resistance which your Committee anticipate, it remains to be seen. In the mean time their language implies that they mean to wait in the expectation of soon finding in the Assemblies a more respectful and complying disposition.

The Committee will most sincerely rejoice should this expectation be realized. The condemnation, however, of the benevolent purposes of Government, continues to be too loud and indignant to justify the hope of the early and effectual co-operation of the Colonial Assemblies. And let it not be forgotten that the delay thus produced, to the length of which there is no express limit, is of itself a great evil. Besides the dangers to be apprehended from suspense and agitation, the nation contracts additional guilt by the unnecessary postponement of those reforms, the moral obligation of which has been unequivocally admitted. The delay is also a real calamity to the great mass of the Slave population. Your Committee

can discover no good reason for withholding from the Slaves in the other islands the same alleviations, at the least, which have been granted to those in Trinidad. They can see no good reason, for instance, why women should still continue liable to be shamelessly exposed and flogged in Jamaica, Barbadoes, &c. ; why the driving whip should be still employed *there* ; why marriage should still be without any legal sanction in *these* Colonies ; why facilities should not be given *there* also to manumissions ; and why the exclusion of the evidence of Slaves should continue to be upheld *there* in all its rigour, making it confessedly impossible to give to apparently protecting laws their just effect.

The friends of Colonial Reform are accused of impatience and precipitation. They are told that an evil which is the growth of ages cannot be cured in an hour, and that the termination of Slavery, in order to be safe, must be very slowly progressive.

But admitting this proposition, the duty is so much the more urgent to commence the necessary work without delay ; and it has not even been pretended that what may be safely done in Trinidad or Berbice, is altogether unsafe in St. Vincent's, Barbadoes or Jamaica.

The argument for delay, which has been drawn from the alleged inveteracy and antiquity of the evil to be cured, appears however to your Committee to have no force whatever when applied to the case of infant or unborn Slaves, or even to Colonies of recent formation. What indeed, in the oldest Colonies, constitutes the obstacle to Emancipation, but the effects produced by the habits of Slavery on the character of the individual who has been long subjected to it ? To prepare the Slaves for the proper use of freedom, is not more difficult because Slavery has existed for ages, than if it had first begun at their birth. It is idle therefore to talk of Slavery being an ancient institution, or of its having been known in all ages and countries, as if these circumstances augmented the difficulties or the necessary delays of its termination

in the Colonies of Great Britain. So to reason against those who chiefly aim at the freedom of the rising generation, and of children yet unborn, is altogether irrelevant and misplaced. If there really exist any evils for the cure of which a single generation is not sufficient, let them be pointed out; and in the mean time be it recollected, that the difficulty of curing a moral malady, when inveterate, is clearly the strongest argument, not for delay, but for speed, in checking its further progression.

Another argument, which has been most strongly insisted upon by West Indians and their advocates, has been, that little in the way of industry is to be expected from the voluntary exertions of emancipated Slaves. It would of course be impossible to discuss at large, on this occasion, the comparative advantages of Free and Slave labour; but this is in fact rendered unnecessary by many of the publications of the Society which are already in the hands of the subscribers. If any one point in political science is more clearly established than another, it is, that free labour is more advantageous than slave labour; and this very point may, as your Committee conceive, be irrefragably established by the very example which has chiefly been relied upon as proving the contrary, namely, the case of St. Domingo.

“The sugar exported from St. Domingo, previously to the emancipation of the Slaves,” say the West Indians, “was 160 millions of pounds; but since free labour has been established, that island does not manufacture enough for its own consumption.” The inference intended to be drawn from this fact is, that the emancipation of Slaves will tend to diminish if not to destroy production. But what is the real state of the case with respect to St. Domingo? In the first place, it is not true that St. Domingo does not grow sugar for its own consumption. In the year 1822, besides satisfying its own demand, a certain quantity, indicated by the figures 652,451, was exported thence, chiefly to France. It is not clear whether this quantity is intended to specify pounds or hundred weights;

but whether it be the one or the other, it proves that there is an excess of the article over the island demand. But this is not all.

The French officers, General La Croix and Colonel Malenfant, who were present in that island between 1795 to 1802, and who have published their observations upon its state during that period, have concurred in affirming that under the government of Toussaint Louverture St. Domingo, though the Slaves had all been emancipated, rapidly recovered its prosperity. There had been a great destruction of labourers, and those chiefly of the most efficient description, in consequence of the desolating wars that had taken place; and the army necessarily occupied many hands. Yet, making due allowance for these circumstances, it is doubtful whether either the produce of the soil or the profit of the planter was inferior to what it had been at any former period.

In 1802 a French army landed in St. Domingo, and a war of extermination followed. Few, if any, sugar-works escaped the general devastation; and considering the circumstances in which that island has since been placed,—that it is still liable to be invaded by France, and that its independence, which it has enjoyed *de facto* for upwards of twenty years, is still unacknowledged by a single European power;—it surely could not have been expected that any individual Haytian should have set about re-erecting sugar-works. To do so would not only require considerable capital, but it would be exposing the capital so employed to the imminent risk of total loss. To frame permanent erections, would also have been inconsistent with the preconcerted plan of defence, against an invading force, adopted by the Haytian Government, which is to deprive that force, as much as possible, of all the means of shelter.

But independently of these considerations, has the price of sugar, as compared with other articles of tropical production, been such, since the year 1804, as to present any strong temptation to the Haytians to engage, under their

peculiar circumstances, in the expensive erection of sugar-works? Has sugar been so profitable an article during the last twenty years, as to induce the freemen of Hayti, unaided indeed, but also, be it remembered, unfettered as they have been in their proceedings by Metropolitan mortgagees, to encounter the various formidable risks which its culture and manufacture must have occasioned?

The first object with the liberated Haytians naturally was, to cultivate such articles as were required for their own subsistence and comfort. In this object they have succeeded. The island abounds with provisions. Food is as cheap and as abundant in Hayti as perhaps in any other part of the world.

Another consequence arising from the emancipation of the Slaves in Hayti, has been such a rapid increase of the population, as not only to repair the waste arising from their cruel and exterminating wars, but to raise their number considerably above what it had been at any former period; and this whilst, in the British Colonies, the population has been rapidly decreasing.

But is it true, as has been insinuated, that Hayti raises no exportable produce? Or is sugar the only article, the large export of which is an unequivocal sign of industry? Coffee, Cocoa, Cotton, Ginger, Pimento, Hides, Mahogany, and Logwood, require, indeed, no expensive erections like sugar; but they require, no less than sugar, the exertion of industry. Now, that of such articles Hayti exports a very considerable quantity, is manifest from the following facts. The tonnage of the United States employed in the trade of Hayti, in the year ending September 1821, was stated in the official returns to Congress for that year to amount to 50,000 tons; and the value of the imports into the United States from Hayti, in the same year, to amount to 2,246,237 dollars, or upwards of half a million sterling; the exports from the United States to Hayti being nearly of the same amount. This was of course wholly independent of the trade of that island with

other parts of the world; and it was at a time also when the dissensions within the island itself, and the increased danger of invasion arising from those dissensions, served greatly to paralyse the efforts of industry. Since the whole island, however, has been united under one head, and somewhat greater security has thus been given to property, its increasing commerce affords the best proof of increasing industry and prosperity. From the official returns of the commerce of Hayti for 1822, it appears that the value of its imports in that year, notwithstanding the armies it maintains, and the sense of insecurity still necessarily arising from the non-recognition of its independence by France, amounted to upwards of thirteen millions of dollars, or nearly three millions sterling, a sum which it is believed is more than double the value of the merchandize imported into Jamaica for the consumption of that island. For these three millions sterling, payment, it is obvious, must necessarily have been made in the produce of Haytian labour.

But St. Domingo is by no means the only instance which might be adduced of the undoubted efficacy of the same moral motives in the minds of Negroes, when emancipated from the cart whip, which are found universally to operate on those of Whites. The case of Guadaloupe during its seven years of freedom; the case of Sierra Leone; that of the numerous free Blacks, and People of Colour in Jamaica, Trinidad, Grenada, and our other Islands, who, notwithstanding their civil and political degradation, have grown rapidly in numbers and in wealth; the case also of hundreds of thousands of emancipated Slaves, spread over the continents of North and South America; all concur in proving, if proof were necessary, the aptitude of the Negro race to acquire habits both of industry and of civil subordination.

If this be denied, let the examples be exhibited of bodies of Negroes who, after having been emancipated from the yoke of Slavery, have made *no* advance in the scale of social improvement; and if, as the Committee believe,

no such examples can be produced,—and all our past experience has been of an opposite kind,—is it reasonable to resist or discourage the progress of emancipation among the Slaves in our own Colonies, on the bare apprehension that they will abuse the liberty which may be conceded to them, to purposes of disorder and rapine; to the destruction of property, the overthrow of civil rule, and the extermination of their White brethren? The instance which has been chiefly relied upon to support this view of the case, namely, St. Domingo, furnishes, when justly considered, a most satisfactory confutation of it. But into that question, after the able elucidation of it by Mr. Stephen\* and Mr. Clarkson†, it will be unnecessary now to enter.

Hitherto, unfortunately, the whole question of emancipation has been viewed as a question involving possible benefits indeed to the *Slave*, but injury if not ruin to the *Master*. Those, therefore, who have advocated the cause of emancipation, have been regarded as actuated by a hostile spirit towards the Planters, or at least as totally regardless of *their* interests, and insensible to *their* dangers. Such, most unquestionably, are not the views and feelings of your Committee. Although their urgent and irresistible motives to exertion in favour of the African race be the inherent and incurable injustice and inhumanity of Slavery, universally acknowledged when Whites are the subjects of it, but equally true when the Negro is its victim; and although they believe that emancipation, while it is called for by every moral and religious as well as political obligation, will prove an unspeakable blessing to the Slaves; yet they are persuaded that the masters will be proportionably benefited by the change. Supposing only that freedom is *willingly* conceded by the master and not

\* See his Crisis of the Sugar Colonies, his Opportunity or Reasons for an Alliance with St. Domingo, and his History of Toussaint Louverture.

† See his Thoughts on the Necessity of Improving the Condition of the Slaves with a view to Emancipation.

extorted by force, your Committee are satisfied that, in a pecuniary point of view, the result would be still more advantageous to the higher than to the lower classes of society. If there be any one axiom in political science, your Committee repeat it; which is more impregnably founded than another in the nature of things, and which is more satisfactorily confirmed by the experience of ages, it is this;—that the labour of the Freeman is more profitable, not only to the State but to the capitalist who employs him, than the labour of the Slave. Has the English Lord or the Livonian or Esthonian Noble less reason than the Villein or the Serf himself to rejoice in the emancipation of the labouring classes, which has taken place in those countries respectively, though at very distant periods of time? On this whole subject so much light has recently been thrown, among others, by Mr. Adam Hodgson in his Letter to M. Say, and by Mr. Cropper in his various pamphlets, as to leave nothing to be said upon it beyond what is to be found in their writings. The conviction produced by those writings in the minds of your Committee, has been strengthened by a consideration, not only of the argument from analogy, but of the peculiar circumstances of Colonial proprietors. And your Committee conceive that, under these circumstances, the conversion of their Slaves into a free peasantry would more effectually relieve them from their almost universal state of pecuniary embarrassment, than all the bounties and protecting duties which they at present enjoy.

But while your Committee feel persuaded of the superiority of free over slave labour, and of the advantage which would result to the master himself, both as a land-owner and a capitalist, from the substitution of the former for the latter; let it not be supposed that they are desirous of shrinking from their share of the burden of any loss which this great measure of policy may cause to individuals. They admit that the existence of Slavery is a national crime; and that the nation, in getting rid of it, should take care that no individual shall sustain an

undue portion of the loss which may thereby be incurred. But, on the other hand, the Planters, to entitle themselves to a fair indemnity, ought willingly and cordially to co-operate with the Nation at large, in bringing this great moral and political evil to the earliest possible termination. Of such cooperation, however, judging from the past, the Committee are forced to confess that they dare not indulge any very sanguine hope. At the same time they readily admit, that there is a wide distinction to be taken between many enlightened West Indians residing in England, and the great body of planters, agents, managers, and overseers, who form the White population of the Colonies; who there engross all power, civil and political, to the exclusion of every other class; and whose dominion over the Slaves has no effectual limit, but is, to all practical purposes, absolute and uncontrolled. It is natural that men in the possession of such unmeasured despotism (and what mind is strong enough to resist its malign influence?) should eagerly endeavour to maintain their preeminence, and should resent and resist, to the utmost of their power, every attempt, however just and expedient, to abridge their authority, or to prevent its abuse; and still more the purpose of reducing them to a state of subjection to the same laws, the equal protection of which it is proposed to extend to the Slaves.

It is not a little remarkable, as illustrating the distinction which has been adverted to between the Planters resident in Great Britain and those resident in the Colonies, that the same resolutions of the Legislature, and the same measures of Government, which have spread the flame of dissatisfaction and almost of rebellion among the Whites from one end of the Antilles to the other, should have been generally assented to and acquiesced in by every West Indian in Parliament.

The Committee at the same time cannot advert without regret to the doctrines advisedly maintained and promulgated by the West Indian body resident in this country, in the Resolutions which they adopted at a Meeting held

on the 10th February last, and in which they assert a right of property in the Negroes, their fellow men and fellow subjects, as absolute and unqualified as that which is possessed in any inanimate chattel.

Herein, indeed, consists that ineffaceable distinction between the two parties, which discourages the hope of compromise or cooperation. Your Committee, and all who take their view of the subject, may not only consent to delay, but may consistently recommend it, as affording the best means of ensuring to the injured Negro race the full benefit of their intended deliverance. They may, and they do, most earnestly wish to accomplish this great end with the smallest personal risk and the least immediate disadvantage to the Slave owner. They may cheerfully submit to their share of any loss which shall be proved to be incurred by the change; but they cannot yield one atom of their principle. That *nothing* can justify the making one man a Slave, or even the retention of one man in Slavery, longer than the real benefit of the Slave himself, viewed in all his circumstances and relations, may require. Every step to be taken ought to conduce to that end, and will be more or less valuable in proportion to its tendency to accomplish it with the least possible delay and danger. The mitigation of the enormous evils incident to the servile state is, in itself, a real and a great good—undeniably so; but it is yet chiefly important as preparing the Slave for the fullest enjoyment of his imprescriptible right, Liberty, by raising his condition, meliorating his moral feelings and habits, and affording the means of opening his mind to a sense of the duties as well as the blessings of his new situation. To grant this amelioration, not as a means but as an end to be rested in—to concede as a favour that they shall be less worked and better fed, more conveniently lodged and more fully clothed, nay, perhaps even somewhat instructed, but all without any reference to eventual liberty either for themselves or their children—is, in the opinion of your Committee, a determination to go on for

ever sinning against man and God—denying or refusing to acknowledge the eternal distinction between the rational and the brute creation—an insult upon humanity, and a mockery of justice—and is at the same time no less absurd than it is criminal.

It is impossible also not to regret, that while the leading West Indians in this country have assented to the Resolutions of Parliament, and have professed to acquiesce in the plans of His Majesty's Ministers, they have not employed their influence more effectually with their own servants and dependants abroad, in obtaining from them a similar assent and acquiescence. If this, however, be not ere long accomplished, Parliament will of necessity be driven to consider what means it possesses, independently of the Colonists, for carrying into effect its wishes with respect to Colonial bondage.

The first and most obvious means has been already adverted to, namely, that of direct Parliamentary interference. It seems to your Committee (they say it with deference) the clear right, and, that right established, the imperative duty, of Parliament to undertake itself the work of Colonial reform, and to carry it on steadily and perseveringly to its consummation. Any doubts on the question of right, which specious analogies may have been employed to raise, or which Colonial clamour and menace may have served to strengthen, had already been solved in a work entitled "Reasons for establishing a Registry of Slaves," published by the African Institution in 1815; and they have been anew fully obviated by the discussion on the subject which has been introduced into that luminous work, on the legal condition of the Colonial Slave, with which Mr. Stephen, in compliance with the request of your Committee, has recently favoured the public.

The right of Parliamentary controul over the Colonies had indeed been long settled in point both of law and precedent. But it is now made manifest, as your Committee conceive, that every consideration, not only

of right, but of expediency ; not only of sound constitutional principle, but of regard to the well-being of the Master as well as the Slave, concurs in recommending the course of Parliamentary interposition in preference to every other.

But if it should be thought unadvisable, by those with whom rests the decision of the question, to adopt this least exceptionable method of terminating the acknowledged evils of the Colonial System ; and should it be practically conceded that the local Legislatures may persist in maintaining a system diametrically opposed to every principle of the British Constitution ; there is still another remedy for those evils, to which all will allow that the authority of Parliament is perfectly competent, and in which its power may be exercised without infringing any alleged rights of the Colonial Assemblies. The Committee refer to the abolition of those bounties and protecting duties which have been granted by Parliament to what is actually the produce of Slave labour, in preference to that of Free labour ; by means of which bounties and duties alone, the system of Slavery is upheld, and without which it would of itself cease.

There is now an almost universal admission that the Slavery which exists in our Colonies is contrary to justice and humanity, and repugnant to the principles of Christianity. Indeed that *that* species of Slavery and Christianity cannot co-exist, is the undisguised and avowed opinion of those who best know its real nature, the Planters of Demerara. But has it been sufficiently considered by the people of England, in what degree every individual amongst them is instrumental in upholding this condemned system ? Every man, woman and child in Great Britain consumes more or less sugar. By means of bounties and protecting duties, the price of that article is enhanced to the consumer to the extent of at least a penny a pound, which on the whole consumption amounts to one million and a half of pounds sterling. The people of Great Britain, therefore, are

thus made to pay to the West Indies at least a million and a half more for their sugar than they would pay for it, if they were at liberty to procure it from other parts even of our own dominions \*. And it is this very million and a half, and this alone, actually paid out of their pockets, which for years past has supported, and which to the present hour does still support, the Slavery they reprobate. Is there then, surely the people of this country have a right to ask, either reason or justice in thus compelling millions who abhor the oppression and condemn the impolicy of Colonial Slavery, to continue to pay a heavy tax, not for the privilege of abolishing it, but for a forced participation in the crime of supporting it? Is it not a grievance against which they ought, and may be expected, universally, and then of course successfully, to remonstrate?

The subject of the sugar duties, it has been intimated, is to undergo revision in the ensuing session of Parliament. There will then be an opportunity of making known the public feeling respecting it. And should the result disappoint their wishes, let it be recollected that it will still be in the power of every individual to give them effect, by renouncing the use of sugar grown by Slaves, and preferring to it the produce of free labour.

Let it not be imagined that these observations have been made in any spirit of hostility to the West Indians. The Committee, it is true, are opposed to their present system. But they, in common with every friend of humanity and of his country, would rejoice if the course of events in the Colonies, and the manifest disposition of the Colonists to co-operate with Government in the work of reform, should obviate every existing ground of difference; and the Committee are fully convinced that an enlightened view even of interests purely West Indian would speedily bring about this co-operation.

The Meeting will recollect that an attempt was re-

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\* See Note II. at the end of the Report.

cently made to establish a West India Company, with a capital of four millions, for the express purpose of purchasing West Indian mortgages. Your Committee saw in this project a design, which was soon afterwards avowed in Parliament, to multiply the number of those who, from participating in West Indian speculations, would feel themselves interested in upholding Colonial Slavery. Many evils, indeed, appeared to your Committee as likely to flow from it, and above all an aggravation of the sufferings of the Slaves, and the indefinite protraction of the period of their emancipation. They are therefore happy to say that the scheme has been abandoned.

The argument on which the advocates of the proposed Company appeared mainly to rely for obtaining subscription, was, that it would prove beneficial to the Slaves by affording additional pecuniary resources to their masters. As the same argument has been employed to reconcile the public to the continuance of bounties and protecting duties on West Indian produce, it seems proper briefly to advert to it. The subject will be found ably treated in various publications already in the hands of the members of this Society. Suffice it for the present to remark, that to enhance the value of produce grown by Slave labour, must tend to enhance the value of the Slave, and to render his manumission more difficult. It must also tend to postpone those economical reforms which are essential to his improvement. A high price of produce naturally has the effect of giving an impulse to the exaction of Slave labour. A low price of produce leads to a directly contrary result. To establish this point satisfactorily in argument, though it would not be difficult, would on this occasion occupy too much time. A single fact, however, may be stated, which will serve to illustrate the truth of the general principle maintained by your Committee.

The Bahama Islands are the poorest and least productive of any of the West Indian Colonies. They raise

scarcely any exportable produce. Their productions are chiefly confined to cattle, live stock, and provisions. Hence the pecuniary resources of the proprietors are generally small. In the Bahama Islands, however, the Slaves are far better off than they are in any other British Colony. They are better treated, more lightly worked, and more abundantly fed. The common allowance of food is from two to three times as great as in the Leeward Islands. The consequence is, that the Slaves in the Bahamas have increased at a rate which would have doubled their population in about twenty-two or twenty-three years, but for the cruel drains which have been made from them to cultivate the sickly swamps of Guiana, where numbers of them have perished.

Demerara, on the other hand, is the most productive Slave Colony belonging to the Crown. But the Slaves are certainly much worse off there, than in the far poorer islands of the Bahamas. The treatment of the Slaves is more severe in Demerara than in any other Colony; the quantity of labour exacted from them is greater; and their general condition still more degraded. What is the consequence? Instead of increasing, as in the Bahamas, so as to double their numbers in twenty-three years, they decrease at a rate which would unpeopple the earth in less than half a century.

It is impossible to explain this fact on any hypothesis which is consistent with the argument, that bounties and protecting duties and West India Companies tend, not to the injury, as the Committee maintain, but to the benefit of the Slave.

The apprehensions excited by the proposal to form this West India Company, had led to an intention of forming a Company for the manufacture and introduction into this country of sugar grown by free labour. This project is for the present suspended; but the inquiries to which it gave birth are likely to lead to important results.

By calculations accurately made and drawn from authentic sources, the Committee have satisfied themselves,

that the capital required to cultivate sugar in the East Indies is very small, as compared with that which is necessary in the West; and that a most advantageous return may be expected from capital so employed.

The Committee will not dwell longer on this subject at present, as it is intended to lay a full view of it before the public.

The Committee have hitherto confined their observations almost entirely to the *Slave* population in our Colonies. The condition, however, of the free Blacks and People of Colour has been forced by various circumstances on their attention, and they feel strongly convinced that it is of the utmost importance to the safety of the West Indies, and to the general interests of the empire, no less than an act of justice in itself, to secure to them the full enjoyment of the rights of British subjects.

The Committee must postpone for the present any detail of the facts on which this opinion is founded. They hail, however, with satisfaction, the beginning of a more just and politic system, with respect to this part of our Colonial population, in the islands of Grenada, Antigua, and St. Kitt's; and they trust that the example there set will be generally followed.

The Committee have already intimated, that they are not aware of any material improvements having taken place during the last year in the Slave Code of any of our Colonies. Professions of an intention to ameliorate the condition of the Slaves have been made by some of the smaller islands; but the Committee are not apprized that in any instance those professions have yet been carried into effect. As to what the state of the Slave actually is in point of law, it stands now completely developed in the elaborate and masterly work of Mr. Stephen, which has lately been given to the public, and for which he is eminently entitled to the gratitude of this Society.

The Committee are also anxious to express their obligations to Mr. Clarkson, who has been passing a year

of active and useful exertion in the service of the Society, and is now meditating fresh efforts to promote the cause which has employed his life.

A Bill for the consolidation and amendment of the laws abolishing the Slave Trade, has received the Royal assent. It was brought into Parliament by Dr. Lushington, and carried through it by his exertions, supported by His Majesty's Ministers. The most valuable new provision which it contains, and one intrinsically of the highest moment, is the abolition of that cruel inter-colonial Slave Trade, which had been permitted to survive the general abolition. No Slave can now be transported from one Colony to another, but by the express license of His Majesty's Government on grounds to be laid before Parliament; and even this power of licensing such transfer will cease in three years.

It may be proper here to state, that there have been formed in different parts of the kingdom no less than 220 associations in aid of the objects of the Society, and that more are still forming.

The number of petitions for the amelioration of the condition of the Slaves, and the gradual extinction of Slavery, presented at the close of the last session, amounted to 225. Those presented in the present session have amounted to nearly 600.

Your Committee cannot conclude without reminding the Meeting, that the cause they have undertaken cannot be efficiently conducted without considerable expense; and that therefore liberal contributions are essential to its success. Whatever funds may be placed at their disposal will be husbanded with care, and employed to the best of their judgement in promoting their great object:—an object which, the Committee believe, under the blessing of God, is to be attained by firmness, activity, and perseverance on the part of the friends of humanity and justice.

Confiding as they do in the upright intentions and concurrent views of His Majesty's Ministers, however they

may differ with respect to some of the means of carrying their common purposes into effect, the Committee have at present no specific measures to propose to the adoption of their friends, beyond that general vigilance which the large interests involved in the question call for, and those occasional efforts which may be required to obviate any attempts made to mislead the public mind through the medium of the press. With this exception, their part seems to be to wait the course of events, and to be guided in their future proceedings by the circumstances which may arise. It would argue insensibility, however, to the goodness of Providence, if they were to close their Report without expressing their gratitude for the progress already made, and for the brighter prospects which they trust are opening upon them; and without declaring their firm and settled conviction, that a cause resting on such principles is absolutely certain of eventual success.

## NOTES.

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### NOTE I. page 9.

**THE** following observations on the threat of Jamaica to renounce her allegiance, are extracted from one of our public journals, and seem entitled to attention.

“ The West Indians have always strongly insisted upon the danger which is likely to arise from discussions in this country respecting Slavery. If their fears were sincere and well founded, we should, without doubt, witness a corresponding conduct on their part. We should see them studiously avoiding, at least in their publications in the West Indies, not only all violent and inflammatory statements, and all angry controversy on the subject, but as much as possible all allusion to it. Whatever danger there may be in discussions respecting slavery at the distance of 5000 miles, must be greatly enhanced when those discussions are transferred to the Colonial Newspapers. The flame being thus brought into more immediate contact with the inflammable matter, combustion is much more likely to follow.

“ But, although the conduct of the West Indians has sufficiently proved that the alarm which they have laboured to excite of danger from discussion in this country is groundless, and is in fact nothing more than an expedient to frighten us from stirring the question at all, we are gravely told of another danger which is still more formidable and imminent. The danger is, that if Parliament should attempt to legislate for the Colonies, Jamaica would renounce her allegiance, and throw herself into the arms of the United States. It is not alleged, indeed, that the great West India proprietors in this country would sanction any such proceeding; but then it has been said that the agents of these proprietors, and all the incumbered planters of that island, would eagerly seize the opportunity, the former of ap-

appropriating to themselves the estates of their employers, the latter of disembarassing themselves of their load of debt to the merchants of England. But is it possible that such a bug-bear, such a mere phantom as this can have frightened a single individual within His Majesty's dominions?

“The Whites are the only part of the population of Jamaica who can have any inducement to pursue the apprehended course. Their whole number has never been estimated at more than 25,000, men, women, and children, of whom there may be nearly 5000 capable of bearing arms. These form little more than one-half of the militia of the island. The other half consists of the free Blacks and people of Colour, amounting, exclusive of about 500 or 600 Maroons capable of bearing arms, to about 4000 men. The King's troops stationed in the island amount to about 3000 men. The slaves form a population of 340,000.

“There is in the first place a manifest absurdity in supposing that the United States, with which we are in a state of profound peace, would listen to any overtures from the rebellious planters of Jamaica; more especially when the ground of their revolt is a determination to resist the wishes of the Parent State for the mitigation and extinction of slavery. And even if America were inclined to listen to any such overture, she knows too well the worthlessness and expensiveness of such a possession, to incur, for its sake, the risk of a single month's expense of a conflict with Great Britain.

“But even if we were to admit that America would favour this transfer of allegiance on the part of the Planters of Jamaica, yet how is it to be accomplished? If the 5000 Whites of that island were all confederate in the design, which could scarcely be the case, yet would they have no domestic difficulties to encounter? Would the King's troops look tamely on, while His Majesty's authority was set at nought, and these men were rising in rebellion against him? And would the Slaves be quite passive under such circumstances? But of all the classes none would be more decidedly opposed to such a step than the free Blacks and People of Colour. They have hitherto been treated with much indignity by the Whites, although they are rising daily in numbers, in opulence, and in respectability. A petition for an extension of their civil privileges has recently been rejected by the

Assembly of Jamaica. The transaction respecting the free men of Colour, Lescenes and Escoffery, has aggravated their distrust of the Whites. *Their* concurrence in any such scheme is therefore hopeless; and without their concurrence the scheme is impracticable. But they would not only not concur in such a scheme, they would be strongly opposed to it. Many of the men of Colour of Jamaica are enlightened by education, and are possessed of very accurate information with respect to all that is passing around them. They know perfectly well, that their main hope of rising from their present state of depression is to be found in the humane and liberal feelings of the Parliament and Public of Great Britain. The boasted liberty of the United States, they are perfectly aware, is the exclusive property of the Whites. In the Slave States of America the people of Colour are as much depressed as they are in Jamaica; while their chance of emerging from this state of depression is much smaller. The Legislation and Government of South Carolina or Georgia, for example, are entirely in the hands of Slave-holders, as is also the Legislation of Jamaica. But then there is this essential difference between the two: in the former, the Slave-owners experience no controul from the general Government with respect to their provincial proceedings: they are wholly independent, and are responsible only to themselves. In Jamaica, on the contrary, the Acts of the Legislature must be submitted to the negative of the King; the public functionaries are also amenable to him for the manner in which they perform their duties; and, above all, they and their whole proceedings are subject to the revision of Parliament. The people of Colour know all this full well; they would therefore regard it as a great evil to be transferred to the United States, and would to a man firmly unite in resisting any movement which tended to that result. But independently of these considerations, the position of Hayti with respect to Jamaica is also to be taken into account. Those know little of the deep and painful apprehensions with which the Whites of Jamaica look to the vicinity of that formidable State, who entertain the notion that it can have seriously entered into the mind of any man amongst them to break with this country. To clamour on the subject may be very politic, and it has doubtless answered its purpose if it has made any of our Statesmen to hesitate in their course. But to conclude from the loudness of the cla-

mour that it is indicative of any serious intention to carry the scheme into effect, would show an extraordinary ignorance of the facts of the case, as well as an utter disregard of all the lessons of experience."

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## NOTE II. p. 33.

This statement has been questioned, but without reason. The bounty accruing to the West Indians, from the mode in which the drawback on refined sugar is regulated, amounts to upwards of six shillings a hundred weight, making of itself, without taking into account the effect of the protecting duty, a bonus to the West Indians of 960,000*l.* on the 160,000 tons of their sugar consumed in this country, besides the bounty paid on what they export. In the debate which arose in the House of Commons on the Sugar Duties, on the 13th of May last, it was contended that the real bonus to the West Indians did not exceed three shillings a hundred weight. This statement has been abundantly disproved, both by Mr. Whitmore in his speech on that occasion, and by Mr. Cropper in several of his pamphlets. If, however, any doubt could still be supposed to rest upon the subject, it would be completely dissipated by a letter, dated the 11th of March 1824, addressed by Mr. George Hibbert, the Agent of Jamaica, to his constituents there, and which has been published in the Postscript to the Royal Gazette of that island of the 1st of May 1824. In that letter, Mr. Hibbert remarks as follows :

"In relation to the alleviation of our commercial distress, it will not surprise you, perhaps, that when Mr. Hume stated in the House of Commons the subject of the reduction of the sugar duty, the members in our interest did not support him. This arose from a previous assurance from His Majesty's Ministers, that a reduction of the sugar duty could not possibly take place without at once depriving us of all the advantage which we now enjoy in the principle and produce of calculating the drawback upon the export of refined sugar, which, *taken altogether, is little, if at all, short of a gratuitous bounty of six shillings per hundred weight* ; and without also denying us all that they were ready to concede in regard both to the duty on

rum, and to the regulations under which it is collected.”  
 “ Under the consideration of these alternatives, the Standing Committee judge it better not to urge, *in the present session*, a reduction of the sugar duty.”

Whatever, therefore, may have been asserted in debate, it is clear that, in private, it is fully understood, and has been deliberately agreed and settled, that the West Indians enjoy, from the mode in which the drawback is regulated, *a gratuitous bounty of six shillings* on the hundred weight of their sugar consumed in this country, as well as on that which is exported ; by which last the price of the whole is necessarily regulated.

**PROCEEDINGS**  
OF THE  
**FIRST ANNIVERSARY MEETING**  
OF THE  
**ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,**  
HELD  
*AT THE FREEMASONS' HALL, IN GREAT QUEEN-  
STREET, LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS,*  
*On the 25th day of June 1824.*

---

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER  
IN THE CHAIR.

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**THE** Report of the Committee, of which the substance is inserted above, having been read,

The Honourable AGAR ELLIS said, that he had heard with very great pleasure, in common with the whole of this large assembly, the Report which had just been so well read; and he hoped, and indeed he sincerely believed, that the endeavours of this Society in the cause of freedom and humanity were likely to be from day to day productive of fresh benefits. This year, he admitted, it could not be said that every thing had occurred which we might have wished; but he had not the smallest doubt that the cause of justice and religion and humanity in which they were engaged, would ultimately triumph over every obstacle. He felt most deeply interested in the proceedings of this Society, and earnestly hoped and trusted that its endeavours would be crowned with the complete success which they deserved. He concluded by moving,

“That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and Committee of the So-

ciety, for the Report now read; that it be referred to them to consider the propriety of printing and circulating the substance of the Report; and that they be requested to continue their valuable services."

**Mr. STEPHEN.**—The first sentiment that must have been produced by the reading of the Report, is that with which the Committee have so properly concluded,—a sentiment of gratitude to the Author of all good; for it is among the best of the blessings he confers on us when he enables us on right principles to be his instruments in his beneficent works; and great, I trust, will be the benefits conferred on the unfortunate Slaves of the Colonies by those measures noticed in the Report, to which, without presumption, we may consider ourselves to have contributed.

The institution of the Society, Sir, was at a time when the prospects of the friends of humanity, in regard to the oppressed African race, were, I think, more than usually darkened;—when a large portion of those hopes which we had conceived from the abolition of the Slave Trade had proved to be delusive;—and when there seemed to be an insensibility, or at least a total inattention, of the public mind to those great national duties that we owe to our Colonial Slaves—duties plainly flowing from the same sacred principles with those of the abolition itself. We had waited in vain during the long and disheartening term of years that had elapsed since the Slave Trade was abolished, for those reformatations within the Colonies, to which that great measure, in the judgement even of those who were the least sanguine, was likely to give rise. But the case is happily altered. Recent as the institution of this Society is, much has since been done, although certainly much more yet remains to do. We ought to feel, therefore, what is so properly expressed by our Committee,—gratitude to Divine Providence for having succeeded thus far.

I therefore premise these remarks, Sir, because, among

the artifices of our enemies—their multiplied and illiberal artifices—one is to represent us as a discontented set of people, who are not satisfied unless they attain at once all their objects. We are accused of not being thankful for what our rulers have already done in this great cause, or content to suffer the work to remain in their hands; and in short of being precipitous, rash and unreasonable in our practical views. Sir, for my own part, I feel, and think it right at the outset to express, much gratitude to His Majesty's Ministers for their recent conduct. When the Society commenced its labours, nothing, we may fairly say, had been attained towards the mitigation of Slavery. The friends of the poor Negroes had, on the contrary, found themselves baffled in every attempt, and had not so much as the promise of a better course of things, not even in those Colonies over which the Crown itself has full legislative power. But we have to thank the Government now, not only for better prospects, but for some very interesting and important objects already obtained. Among these, let me congratulate Your Royal Highness and the Meeting on one, which the Report properly notices in terms of commendation and joy,—I mean the approaching termination of the intercolonial Slave Trade; a branch of that horrible commerce not less opprobrious, not less merciless, than the African Slave Trade itself, but which has hitherto been permitted to subsist between the British West India Islands. Within the last twenty-four hours, I believe, His Majesty's assent has been given to a Bill for consolidating the Abolition Acts, containing this most important clause,—That hereafter (with a qualified limitation for a period only of three years) no Slave shall be liable to be transported by the authority of his master from the island in which he is settled to any other part of the world.

I could have wished indeed that the interdiction had been immediate: but we have great reason to hope that the effect will be the same; because during that period the practice is not to be permitted in any case without

the special license of His Majesty's Government: and I have too good an opinion of our Ministers, and especially of the very respectable Statesman who presides over the Colonial department, to believe it possible that this licensing power will ever be drawn into exercise; because I well know that no grounds for it in any case can possibly be alleged and proved, such as in the mind of an upright, humane and liberal man will justify those cruel transportations. Your Royal Highness, I doubt not, will feel with me, that if we had yet gained nothing more, this is a reformation of most essential and vital importance. It not only secures the poor Slaves from one very cruel and calamitous species of oppression, but facilitates and encourages their further protection and relief, by the authority of the local legislatures under which they live. It will not now depend on the will of the master, whether a humane and liberal exercise of that power which a Colonial Assembly possesses in a particular island, shall confer any real or lasting benefit on the Slaves within its jurisdiction, or shall not even deteriorate their lot. Hitherto the meliorated condition of a Slave, by the law of the particular colony he lives in, might actually prove to him a curse instead of a blessing, by leading to his removal for ever from his family and native home; for the prices of Slaves will be found to be the highest where their condition and treatment are the worst; and with an unfeeling and tyrannical master it might become a motive for the transportation to another colony where the laws are less humane, that his own power would be there more unlimited, and on his own narrow-minded views could be used to greater advantage. An island consequently that had advanced in the course of humane improvements much before the rest, might not only have lost the just reward, in the preservation and increase of its labouring population, but have increased the opposite evil. This measure, therefore, was necessary to pave the way for future improvements. Considering the number of petty legisla-

tures which at present exist in the Colonies, the work, if referred to them, must at best be conducted with no uniform or equal progress : but now, whenever any good is obtained for the Slaves, that good will be secured ; the poor subjects of it, at least, will not have to exchange a milder for a more aggravated slavery, and be exiled for ever from their native homes, their families, and all that endears life to them, because their value may be greater in another Colony where the master's power is less restrained, and where oppression has produced its usual consequences, a great mortality among the Slaves, a deficiency in their numbers, and a large advance in their price.

This however is not the only measure for which we ought to be thankful. The Government has at length entered on a work which I lament its having deferred so long. It has begun to legislate upon wise and humane principles between the Masters and Slaves of those Colonies in which the power of legislation rests exclusively in the Crown. It is highly important, not only for the good immediately to be produced in the conquered Colonies where this power exists ; but because, as an example and a precedent, it cannot fail to operate beneficially for our cause on both sides of the Atlantic ; here, by pledging the Government and Parliament to express practical principles and specific measures of reform applicable to Colonial Slavery at large ; and on the other side, by teaching the Assemblies of such Colonies as possess the power of internal legislation, that Government and Parliament are in earnest, and that the non-interposition of the supreme legislature may be expected if reformation is longer withheld.

But, Sir, while I think it right at the outset—while I think it just and wise, to give this merited praise to His Majesty's Ministers for what they have already done, I certainly feel great dissatisfaction at the position in which our cause is still left in those Colonies where a concurrent power of interior legislation (I say

a concurrent power, for the claim of an exclusive one is too preposterous to deserve an answer) rests with the Assemblies. In those islands, I lament to say, nothing has been gained hitherto for their unfortunate Slaves, or nothing of any real value; much less any advances towards those measures that have been recommended to them from Parliament and the Throne. This opposition of the Assemblies, indeed, could be no disappointment. We knew from long experience that their concurrence in any effectual reforms was hopeless. And yet we are blamed for not being satisfied with a reference to them. It is said that we are impatient; that we do not make the proper allowances, or give the necessary time; that we have to deal with an old and inveterate evil; that we have to grapple with long-established systems and prejudices, and ought therefore to make allowances for the Assemblies, and bring them by good temper on our side to a more rational and a more liberal way of thinking.

Now, Sir, when thus accused, I think it highly important that all the friends of our cause should have brought home to their recollection the experience we have had on this subject. If it had been a new thing to recommend to the Colonial Assemblies by the executive Government, at the instance of Parliament, supported by the personal influence of the leading Proprietors in this country, reformations of their Slave Laws—if such an expedient had never been attempted before—or never failed before—there might then be some reason for contending that the concurrence of the Assemblies ought to be long and patiently waited for, before we called upon the Government or Parliament to interpose in a direct and compulsory way. Sir, it is perhaps not known to all, or perfectly within the recollection of many who hear me, what powerful solicitations on this subject have formerly been addressed to the Assemblies in vain. I have therefore brought into the room a book containing a collection of Parliamentary Papers on the Slave

Trade, from which, with Your Royal Highness's permission, I will read two or three passages, to show how fully the experiment for which we are desired to wait, was tried at a former period, and what was its result.

As far back as the year 1796, the West India Committee, as it is called, a body formed of the most eminent and influential Colonial Proprietors in this country, and chiefly Members of Parliament, earnestly recommended to the Assemblies reforms of their interior system. It was on the 14th December 1796, that the Committee entered into resolutions confirmatory of a Report of a Sub-committee of its own body, and unanimously requesting Mr. Charles Ellis to make a motion, which the Sub-committee had approved of, on the subject of the Slave Trade, and the situation of the Negroes in the islands. The form of the motion, which was afterwards made by Mr. Ellis, and supported by the whole Colonial party in Parliament, and unanimously adopted by the House of Commons, was for an Address to the Crown, praying that His Majesty would graciously recommend to the Governors, Councils and Assemblies of the West India Islands, "measures such as should regulate and controul the importation of Slaves from Africa; and by obviating the causes which had hitherto impeded the natural increase of Negroes already in the islands, should render that trade less necessary, and ultimately lead to its termination; and further, *with a view to the same effect, the adoption of every measure which might conduce to the moral and religious improvement of the Negroes, and promote their happiness, by securing to them the certain, immediate, and active protection of the law.*"

An Address in these terms was carried up by the Commons to the Throne early in April 1797; and soon afterwards the late Duke of Portland, then His Majesty's principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, transmitted circular instructions to the Governors of all the West India Islands, requiring them at the earliest opportunity to communicate the Address of the House of Com-

mons to the respective Councils and Assemblies, and to recommend to their particular consideration and attention the important objects specified therein.

But the West India Committee did not trust to the Royal and Parliamentary influence alone. They added, what was likely to be of greater efficacy, confidential earnest solicitations from the members of that body, and from the Colonial Agents in this country, to the leading Proprietors resident in the different islands, imploring them, for the sake of the Slave Trade, for the preservation of which they were all then earnestly struggling, and which they deemed essential to the very existence of the Sugar Colonies, to comply with the recommendations of the Crown. The better to impress this powerful consideration, the secret deliberations of the Committee, and the motives on which Mr. Ellis had been requested, as its organ, to move the Address in Parliament, were confidentially disclosed; and as the correspondence was afterwards brought to light and printed by authority of Parliament, (a discovery not I presume at all foreseen by the writers,) I am enabled to read to you from these Parliamentary documents some of the arguments that were used.

The Report of the Sub-committee contained the following reasons for the measure it recommended.

1st. *That the repeated discussion of the abolition of the Slave Trade in Parliament may produce consequences of the utmost danger to the Colonies; and that if an Act for this purpose should ever pass the British Parliament, it will be fatal to them.*

2nd. *That the question of abolition will continue to be agitated year after year, and as often as the forms of the House permit; and that neither the House of Commons nor the country in general will suffer it to rest, till some steps have been taken which may afford them reason to believe, that every regulation has been adopted which is consistent with the safety of the Colonies.*

3rd. *That many persons of great weight and character,*

*though conscious of the danger to be apprehended from the measures proposed by Mr. Wilberforce, have supported, and will continue to support them, because no mode of conduct at all compatible with their ideas of humanity has been proposed as an alternative.*

*4th. That, on the other hand, many persons who have hitherto opposed the measures of Mr. Wilberforce, will feel themselves under the necessity of submitting to them, unless some plan of regulation shall be brought forward.*

*5th. That there is reason to believe, that besides Mr. Wilberforce's Bill, there will be proposed some more specious plan of moderate reform and gradual abolition, which will meet with very general support; and that it is of the utmost importance that such a plan should be anticipated, because the West India Proprietors, from their local knowledge, are the only persons to whom the formation of it can be safely intrusted.*

*6th. That consequently, for the joint purposes of opposing the plan of Mr. Wilberforce, and establishing the character of the West India body, it is essential that they should manifest their willingness to promote actively the cause of humanity, by such steps as shall be consistent with safety to the property of individuals, and the general interests of the Colonies.*

The members of the Committee enforced these arguments by their own individual opinions and remarks. The late Sir William Young, for instance, a proprietor of great eminence, and one of the most strenuous opponents of the abolition, thus wrote to his friend, the President of Antigua :

*"I cannot omit the declaration, that on every ground of past experience in Parliament, from the first agitation of the question I advert to, and from all speculation on the future that my mind can reach, it appears to be indispensably necessary to take some steps in our Colonies by legislative provisions, touching the situation of Negroes in respect to society, and to promote a natural increase of their popula-*

*tion, and thus not only stop for the present, but gradually supersede the very pretensions at a future period, to a measure of direct abolition of the Slave Trade by the Mother Country, a measure which would blast the root of all our settlements of property—change the foundation of every bequest, loan and security—turn every mortgage into an annuity on the lives of Negroes—institute a general system of foreclosure, and, depreciating our estates, preclude all immediate resources, and ruin every interest.”*

Here, Sir, I cannot resist the temptation to remark by the way, how clearly these papers refute another charge which our opponents have the confidence to make against us. It is alleged that the present call by Abolitionists for the reformation and gradual termination of Slavery, is new, and inconsistent with their former professions—that we are asking that which pending the abolition controversy was not in our contemplation, or was a latent purpose which we unfairly concealed and disclaimed; yet here we find it expressly noticed, as one of the arguments for this memorable interference on the part of the West Indians themselves, that some specious plan of moderate reform and gradual abolition was expected to be brought forward at that period. And what, Sir, was the cause of their not being then brought forward in Parliament, when, as the Report itself states, they would have met with very general support? What, but the measure thus imposingly brought forward by the West Indian gentlemen themselves? They then held forth what the Report speciously suggests, that interior regulations could be safely made by the Assemblies alone; and as experience had not at that period shown that the most powerful appeals to those bodies would be fruitless, it would have been impossible for the friends of reformation, after such an interposition of the West India Proprietors in this country, to take the work out of their hands. The measure in that respect produced the effect desired by its authors. It effectually for a long time frustrated the hopes and the plans of

Mr. Wilberforce. It left him no other course to take, as far as related to the mitigation of Slavery in our Colonies, but to fall in with the views of the Committee, to support Mr. Ellis's motion, and patiently wait the event.

It is too much, as Your Royal Highness will feel, after this, that the same Colonial party should impute to my dear friend here (Mr. Wilberforce), as an inconsistency, his not having at that time called upon Parliament to perform its duties more directly towards the Slaves, and his making that call now, when it is plain there is no other resource.

It is not, however, for the sake of repelling this idle charge of inconsistency, or *breach of faith* as they have the absurdity to call it, against Mr. Wilberforce, that I have troubled Your Royal Highness and this highly respectable audience with the extracts I have read; it is for the more important purpose of showing how well justified the Society is in not suspending its efforts from any reliance at this period on the Colonial Assemblies. It is not merely by their recent conduct, in their contemptuous rejection of the Parliamentary Resolutions of the last session, and the solicitations of His Majesty's Government founded upon them, but by their resistance of that still more powerful influence which was employed in 1797, that we are taught to despair of any effectual mitigation of Slavery from this new reference to them.

We were then, as now, supported by the voice of Parliament and the Crown; and the whole body of the Colonial Proprietors in England, collectively and individually, did their utmost in our favour. It was the measure not of their enemies, as they affect to regard us, but of their fellow Planters, their agents and partisans; and it came recommended to them by arguments far more influential than any that can now be used. To defeat Mr. Wilberforce in his efforts for the abolition of the Slave Trade, was the great object, the inviting reward of their compliance, on which the West India Committee, as I have shown, then relied, but which can be held out no

more. The alternative of reform by Parliamentary legislation was then denounced, and reasonably expected. But this argument, I fear, has lost all its credit. What reason, then, have we to hope that the Assemblies will now be more compliant? They now even venture to deny the authority of Parliament; which their most zealous partisans at that time were far from disputing. The Committee, as we have seen, questioned the safety of interior regulations by Parliament, but by no means its right to make them.

That the measure then brought forward by Mr. Ellis, at the instance of the Committee, and all the powerful persuasions which accompanied it, were utterly fruitless, is beyond dispute. Some ostensible laws, indeed, passed in some of the Colonies; but that they neither were, nor were meant to be, enforced, has since been clearly proved. Without treading on any doubtful or debatable ground, let us advert to the two grand branches of reform which Mr. Ellis's address and the instructions of the Duke of Portland pointed out as the most essential, namely, the religious instruction of the Slaves, and their protection from oppression by law.

The instructions to the Governors were anxiously particular, especially as to religious improvement, and even pointed out the encouragement of Missions as one of the best means for that purpose. "*As the instruction of Negroes (said His Grace) is of the utmost consequence, it would be important to know whether the Legislature of the island has in view any particular modes of effecting this purpose; and what species and degree of encouragement it would be disposed to hold out to such Missionaries as might be found properly qualified for that purpose, and would undertake that duty; either by enacting that such Missionaries should procure in favour of the estate where they are employed, certain privileges, immunities and advantages, or in what other manner their services should be rewarded by the island. This would lead to the general establishment of the Christian religion among the Negroes, and would es-*

*tablish marriages ; it would restrain promiscuous intercourse, and impress their minds in a simple yet forcible manner with the great truths of morality."*

Now, Sir, we too well know that during twenty-seven years that have since ensued, these suggestions have almost every where been entirely fruitless, and treated with utter disregard. No public provision whatever for the religious instruction of the Slaves, no means of reclaiming them from Pagan ignorance, and teaching them even the first elements of Christianity, have any where been supplied. The total neglect of the Royal and Parliamentary recommendation in this respect, is undisputed and avowed. As to the Missionaries, instead of public encouragement, they have met in most of the Colonies active opposition and persecution, as well as contempt. Destruction of their meeting-houses, expulsion by unrestrained and unpunished popular outrage, trial by Martial Law, and condemnation in one instance to an infamous death on the most false and frivolous pretences ;—such are the rewards that these pious self-devoted men have received in our Sugar Colonies. Unless this be encouragement, I know of none that any West Indian Assembly has given to them.

Then, Sir, with regard to the other grand branch of reformation recommended by the Address of 1797, the "*securing to the Slaves the certain, immediate, and active protection of the law*"—in what manner has this been accomplished? Their legal protection is every where a mere sound. Abstaining from every ground that has been or can be disputed, and assuming only what the Assemblies and their partisans admit, rules of evidence are still inexorably maintained in every Colony, which avowedly render fruitless in general every law that exists to protect them from violence and oppression. It is not, as Your Royal Highness knows, by us only ; it is by the Judges and Magistrates of the Colonies, and even by some of their legislative bodies themselves, that the rejection of the evidence of Slaves against White men is

stated to be (what no thinking and impartial man indeed can doubt it must in general prove) a fatal bar to their protection by law, and a source of impunity to the white perpetrators of even the most heinous crimes against them.

Among a multitude of authorities that might be cited to this effect, I will confine myself to one; the testimony of the late Sir William Young, one of the members of the West India Committee of 1796, and the Secretary of that body, the strong terms of whose letter to his correspondents in Antigua I have read to you. He had afterwards to record in a most decisive and impressive manner the failure of his own persuasions; for about fifteen years after, in the year 1811, being then Governor of Tobago, he had officially to answer inquiries consequent on an Address of the House of Commons as to the measures that had in consequence of the former addresses been adopted for the legal protection of Slaves; and I beg leave to read from another Parliamentary document part of the answer he gave:

*“ I think the Slaves have by law no protection. In this, and I doubt not in every other island, there are laws for the protection of Slaves, and good ones; but circumstances in the administration of whatever law render it a dead letter. When the intervention of the law is most required, it will have the least effect; as in cases where a vindictive and cruel master has dared to commit the most atrocious cruelties, even to murder his Slave, no free person being present to witness the act. There appears to me a radical defect in the administration of justice throughout the West Indies, in whatever case the wrongs done to a Slave are under consideration; or rather, that justice cannot in truth be administered, controlled as it is by a law of evidence, which covers the most guilty European with impunity; provided that when having a criminal intent he is cautious not to commit the crime in the presence of a free witness.*

*“ On small plantations there is but one free person, the resident Manager, and no Slave can appear against him. In the back yard of a jobber of a small gang for hire, in the*

*workshops or outbuildings of each artisan or petty tradesman, and within every house, the greatest cruelties may be exercised on a Slave without a possibility of conviction. I should consider it (he adds) as inconsistent with the respect and deference I bear to the sagacity and wisdom of the august body for whose use this Report is framed, to idly enlarge it with the enumeration of humane laws for the protection of Slaves ; all rendered nugatory by the conditions of evidence required in their administration."*

Such was the case as stated by Sir William Young in 1811 ; and such it still undeniably is, with no alteration worthy of notice, in all our Sugar Colonies. Such also the Planters intend it shall continue ; for in the late speech of Earl Bathurst in the House of Lords, in which His Lordship stated what had been done and recommended by His Majesty's Government towards the mitigation of Slavery, he added that all the measures but one had been concurred in by the West Indian Proprietors in this country ; and that single exception, if His Lordship was correctly understood, was the admission of the evidence of Slaves against free persons. Let us admire the consistency of these gentlemen in supporting, as they for the most part did in the late Parliamentary investigation, the proceedings against the Missionary, Mr. Smith. The evidence of Slaves, Sir, is sufficient, it seems, to convict a preacher of the Gospel!—It is sufficient to condemn him to death ; although the Slaves who give the evidence are swearing for their own lives!—It is sufficient to give currency and judicial credit to the most palpable, and monstrous, and inconsistent fables that ever were invented in romance—It is sufficient to prove that a pious self-devoted minister of the Gospel of Peace, is an instigator of sedition, rebellion, and bloodshed—It is sufficient to prove that a man who is sinking into his grave under the influence of a pulmonary complaint—who has a helpless wife on the spot with him— who in all probability has not many weeks to live, is desirous of being the leader in a bloody and desperate

contest of bands of insurgent Slaves, in order that he may be made their Emperor, and reign over them in the swamps and woods of the Guiana continent!! The evidence of Slaves, Sir, is sufficient for all this; though they themselves are avowedly guilty of the crime they impute, and give their testimony under an extreme influence of terror that would disqualify the most respectable of our countrymen from being heard as a witness in any court of this country. Their evidence may be safely received and relied upon against a prisoner, when a whole infuriated community is clamorous for his destruction; but is too dangerous to be heard in any case before a jury of White men, all whose prepossessions, and all whose sympathies, are adverse to the prosecutor and the witness, and favourable to the party accused. The same Colonists, it seems, still inexorably oppose the reception of such witnesses, however credible, and however unimpeachable on every ground but the colour of their skins, when necessary to enforce the laws against the oppressors of their unfortunate class. Neither the Assemblies nor their partisans here, it seems, will consent in that respect to change a rule which their more zealous champions themselves have condemned as an insurmountable obstacle to the protection of the Slaves, and the course of public justice.

Now, Sir, this is the experience we have had for seven-and-twenty years. It was in April 1797 that this recommendation was sent to the Assemblies, supported, as I have shown, by every powerful motive that could be suggested—backed by the influence of their own agents,—by the Colonial Proprietors,—by the unanimous vote of Parliament,—and by the zealous solicitations of the Duke of Portland, then at the head of the Colonial department. And yet we see that in those two great points chiefly recommended to their attention, the religious instruction of the Slaves, and their protection by law from the wanton injuries of their masters and other oppressors, the case virtually stands in the

year 1824 just as it stood in the year 1797. Is it intemperate, then—is it unreasonable—is it precipitate, in this Society, not to be content with a new reference to the same Assemblies, and not passively to rely again on the same experiment thus tried, and thus found to be fruitless?

Our enemies affect to blame us for not leaving the case in the hands of Government, and patiently expecting the result of its new solicitations; and even to ascribe to this cause the intemperate conduct of the Colonies; but was not the case left in the hands of the Government, and had not its influence with the Assemblies full scope, without any interruption from us, from 1797 till the spring of the last year? If a term of twenty-six years was not long enough for patient acquiescence on our part, how long were we expected to wait before we raised our voice against this great national iniquity, and invoked the moral and religious feelings of the British people to aid us in a call for reformation?

They object also to the necessary means which their own obstinacy compels us to employ. How, otherwise, can we oppose to the formidable and fatal influence which the Colonial party possesses in and out of Parliament, and which they indefatigably employ against us through a thousand channels public and private, the only power that we can invoke, that of public opinion, without exposing those cruel abuses which we wish to correct, and exciting public discussions on the duty and the means of reformation? Yet we are loaded with invectives for pursuing this necessary course. We are accused of exciting discontent among the unfortunate Slaves (as if it were possible for human beings not to be discontent with such a condition as they are reduced to), and every ordinary disorder incident to the system, as well as the mischiefs which their own extreme rashness and violence, in opposition to the measures of Government, have occasioned, are laid to our charge, on the insidious and absurd pretence that the discussions in Parliament, and in our

public prints, are read and misinterpreted by the poor ignorant and degraded beings to whom they relate.

Sir, if the fact were so, what other alternative is left to us by their own obduracy, unless wholly to abandon the sacred cause in which we are engaged? We must do this, or continue our efforts to enlighten the people of England on this subject; and to promote by their constitutional influence what we believe to be the only effectual remedy, Parliamentary legislation, which without the aid of popular feeling it would be difficult perhaps for the Government itself to apply.

But the alarms with which the public mind is assailed by our adversaries, are utterly groundless; and are felt by themselves to be so. No man can read the newspapers printed in the Colonies, of which the only patrons and chief readers are the White inhabitants, without being convinced, unless he supposes them to wish for insurrections, that they entertain no real fear of such effects from our discussions. It would be impossible for me to put this argument in a stronger and more conclusive manner than that in which it has been stated in the Report. But, by way of further illustration, let us suppose that any man in this metropolis were to set himself to oppose that valuable improvement, the lighting our streets by gas lamps, professing that he thought them so extremely dangerous even in our public streets, from the risk of conflagration, that they ought not to be suffered; and let us further suppose, that the same man, notwithstanding this, was at the same moment known to be constructing gas pipes and lamps in his own dwelling and his own warehouses, though filled with the most combustible and valuable effects, for the benefit of the same invention;—surely we should be inclined to say in such a case, “This man cannot be in earnest. Gas lights may be safe, or they may be dangerous; but his opinion is plain from his conduct; and his fears are mere pretence and imposture.” Not less inconsistent is the affected alarm of the resident

Planters and Proprietors of Slaves in the West Indies on the score of our discussions on this side of the Atlantic, while their own newspapers, which they would stop in a moment if they contained any thing that they thought unsafe to themselves, are filled every week, not merely with the reports of what we publish or what we say, but with the most inflammatory comments and the most dangerous perversions, as well calculated as possible, if the Slaves were indeed readers of newspapers, and political speculators, to excite them to resistance and revolt.

To expose this insincere and disingenuous conduct is not needless; for Your Royal Highness knows, that absurd though such an objection is when used to silence necessary discussion in this country, and inconsistent though it grossly is in the mouths of our Colonists, it unfortunately does in some degree serve their insidious purpose, in the minds of well meaning but uninformed men among us.

In this and other points the disingenuous arts employed against us offend almost as much against truth and reason, as the system defended by them, does against justice and humanity; and we may learn from the character of this opposition, as well as from its violence, how little ground of hope there is that the Assemblies will be disposed to change their conduct, and to adopt with sincerity and effect the recommendations of His Majesty's Government. I heartily wish that I could hold out to Your Royal Highness and to the Meeting, personally conversant as I am with the state of things in those Colonies, the slightest hope of such a change; but I must frankly declare, Sir, that I have no hope of that kind; and regard all solicitations addressed to the Assemblies as tending only to delay, disappointment and mischief.

But do I therefore wish that this Society should fly in the face of His Majesty's Ministers? or that we should impute to them insincerity in their professions? Do I wish that we should be insensible of the merit of what they have done, because we are thus reasonably distrustful, and even despairing, of the means they are employing.

to accomplish that which they have engaged further to do? Far indeed am I, Sir, from such injustice, or from recommending any conduct to this Society inconsistent with a perfect reliance on the good intentions of His Majesty's Government. For several months to come, at least, the case must implicitly be left in their hands; and their new experiment on the Assemblies will be tried without any interference by us. I need not say "Wait," for we *must* wait; as the Parliamentary session is now on the point of being closed. Until the next winter no practical measures can be proposed to Parliament, which alone, in my opinion, will or can do any thing effectual. Meantime we should rest satisfied, and I for one am ready to say we have much reason to be so, that it is the sincere intention of Ministers to redeem the pledge they have given us on this interesting and sacred subject.

But it is nowise inconsistent with the most perfect confidence in them, to persist by all proper and respectful means in keeping up the public interest in our cause, and preparing for a further expression of that general feeling which we know to exist in its favour with all who understand its merits, and are not enlisted by their private interests and connexions in the ranks of our opponents. Such means are often necessary in this free country to support the right intentions of the Government, and strengthen its hands; especially when the combined and active exertions of a powerful party, actuated by particular interests, are zealously opposed to the interests, the wishes, and the duties of the nation at large. Let us, then, notwithstanding what we have attained in possession and promise, and notwithstanding all the clamours and the prejudices that are opposed to us, persevere in our appeals to the understandings and the consciences of our countrymen, against this great evil, and this great national crime of Slavery, until we have obtained from Parliament, a deliverance from its mischiefs and its guilt. In these views, Sir, I most cordially second the Motion that has been made, "That the Thanks of this

Meeting be given to the Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and Committee of the Society, for the Report now read; that it be referred to them to consider the propriety of printing and circulating the substance of the Report; and that they be requested to continue their valuable services."

The motion was then put, and carried unanimously.

**The Honourable BAPTIST NOEL.**—Sir, if the Planters of Demerara had heard at this moment that emancipation was declared by the Government of this country for their Slaves, it would not have fallen on them more like a clap of thunder, than it has on me on hearing myself called to address this Meeting on the motion which I hold in my hand. But, Sir, the unexpectedness of the call, and my consequent want of preparation, will save this Meeting from what it otherwise might have been exposed to—a tedious endeavour to enforce a motion, the importance of which I cannot but feel most strongly. The spirit of that motion is, that this Meeting recognises the system of Slavery, such as it exists in our Colonies, to be repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, contrary to the soundest maxims of policy, and a gross violation of the principles of humanity and of justice. It goes on to state, "that, animated with the hope of being instrumental in putting a period to this state of oppression and suffering, and wiping out this foul reproach to the British name and character, this Meeting now pledge themselves to prosecute the sacred cause they have undertaken, with zeal, activity and perseverance, until, by the blessing of God on their united efforts, they are enabled to rejoice together in the final accomplishment of their great work of mercy." I should feel the greater difficulty in pressing this motion on the attention of the Meeting, had I not been completely anticipated by that able Report which has been read to-day, and by the speech of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, and to whom I have listened with the highest satisfaction and the deepest interest. Nothing need be added to the argu-

ments brought forward by that honourable gentleman and in the Report which you have heard, and to that mass of information which has been given in the publications issued to the world through the aid of this Society, in order to prove that the system of Slavery existing in the Colonies, is entirely repugnant to the spirit of Christianity. The question we have to consider is not what Slavery is in the abstract ; we are called to pronounce what the Slavery in our Colonies is—what Slavery is in Jamaica—what in Demerara ;—a Slavery which, in spite of the veil that has been spread over its more hideous features—in spite of the difficulty of getting access to its grosser horrors—in spite of the efforts made to hide from this country its real character—it is now clearly demonstrated, is a system so replete with enormity and horror, that we no longer can hesitate in employing with respect to it the very strongest terms of reprobation. Is it not, I would ask, (and I am sure the heart of every one here will respond to that question,)—Is it not repugnant to the spirit of Christianity that one man should be the absolute proprietor of his fellow, and the arbiter of his destinies—that he should have power, not only to shut him out from the enjoyment of all the blessings which a bountiful Providence so profusely lavishes upon man, but from the higher blessings of Christian light and knowledge, so as almost to destroy that attribute which distinguishes him from the brute, while it links him with the Divinity—his moral responsibility ? Is it possible that a Slave under the despotic and uncontrouled authority of his master, should be a morally responsible being in the same sense in which we are responsible beings ? Will any one deny that it is repugnant to Christianity, that one human being, at the will of a fellow man, should be liable to have all the finest feelings of his heart outraged without the possibility of redress—that he should be liable to be torn and for ever separated from the society of his wife and children—that he should be liable to have his body lacerated with the bloody scourge, without daring

to utter the slightest murmur or complaint on account of the painful and barbarous infliction? A thousand terrible facts might be brought forward to attest the truth of this state of things.—Look again at the provision which has been made for the instruction of the Slaves in Christianity—how miserably deficient it is! What inadequate means have been employed to raise the hopes of these wretched beings to those bright regions of peace, and rest, and joy, which Christianity opens to the view! In general, they are suffered by their masters to remain in a state of heathenish destitution of all religious knowledge, and in a worse than heathenish wretchedness and degradation; and all lest their own paltry temporal interests should suffer by the moral elevation of their Slaves. And what excuse can be offered for this outrageous violation of every Christian duty? Is it the colour of the Slave? Is it the degraded state of intellect or of morals to which, by our own system, we have reduced him? Is it because, having made him a Slave, we have doomed him to possess those evil dispositions which never fail to characterize a state of Slavery, whether the subject of it be white or black? Is it on this account, or on what other, that we exclude him from the pale of our sympathy, and systematically depress him from our own level to that of the brutes that perish? It makes very little difference, in our estimate of the evil of Slavery, that there may be many Planters in Jamaica, and in the other Colonies, who prove mild and merciful masters, who have the interest of their poor Slaves at heart, and are anxious to ameliorate their condition. All this cannot rectify the incurable evils of the system; these are beyond the reach of individual benevolence. In proof of this, let any one look at Mr. Stephen's excellent delineation of Colonial Slavery, and then let him ask himself whether a system in all respects so execrable as this has ever before existed. It is difficult to find terms strong enough to express all one feels on the subject: and yet I fear, on the other hand, lest, in using terms of appropriate force with respect to the system, I

should be thought to entertain feelings of enmity to the persons of those who, by inheritance or purchase, possess a property in Slaves. This is not the case : at the same time it is impossible to contemplate without indignation, a system by which the subjects of it may be remedilessly wronged in every way in which it is possible for one man to wrong his fellow ; and may be made to sustain, in addition to all the numberless vexatious and nameless aggravations which the details of every day may bring with it, injuries of the severest and most lasting kind, without the hope or possibility of redress. Surely this is a state which ought no longer to exist under a Christian Government. A further proof of the unchristian tendency of Colonial Slavery is to be found in those recent proceedings in Demerara, which we all have so much reason to deplore ; I mean the proceedings on the Court Martial which adjudged Mr. Smith to death. What doctrines could be more utterly repugnant to Christianity, than those which were advanced by that Court—advanced, nay, and acted upon too, without any apparent consciousness that they were thus repugnant ? The gentlemen who composed that Court, adjudged Mr. Smith to have violated his duty as a Christian minister, and to have committed a heinous offence, because he taught the Slaves who attended him, that one of the indispensable obligations of the Christian religion was the observance of the Sabbath. Can that system be otherwise than repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, which will not permit its most important duties to be performed by nineteen twentieths of the population, and makes it even treasonable to inculcate them ? A Christian minister, in short, becomes criminal, in their eyes, who teaches the Slaves to obey those laws of God which their Masters are in the constant habit of violating ! But I will not waste words in the proof either of this or of the other point embraced by my motion, namely, that the Slavery of our Colonies is a gross violation of the principles of justice, as well as of the soundest maxims of policy. If proofs were needed, the Report we have heard would

furnish them; and if not, I should only have to appeal to the heart of every individual in this room for its truth. Is there one who breathes the atmosphere of this free and happy land, who is not conscious that all his best feelings would be outraged if he was to be transplanted into that region of sorrow and suffering and degradation, of tyranny and oppression, where Slavery prevails, and where its demoralizing effect is as terrible on the Slave master as on the Slave himself—carrying its blighting curse to every thing with which it comes in contact—withering the best energies of human nature, and under its baneful influence turning into barrenness the fertility of the most luxuriant soil? And what is the practical result to which all these considerations should bring us? Is it not this?—That it is an imperative duty, which must bind the conscience of every one amongst us, to wipe off from our beloved country that blot which yet remains on her character for not having done all she might have done to terminate this horrible state of Slavery. Is it not a duty, which we must all feel in our consciences to be absolutely imperative, steadily and perseveringly,—with temperance I admit, but still with a steadiness which no opposition can overcome, which no interest can be able to resist—to persevere in bringing to the speediest termination possible so foul a system of oppression and irreligion? I hope from my heart, Sir, that the successive appeals which are made to our consciences will not be without their effect—that we shall not look on our meeting here as a mere perfunctory service, but that we shall feel ourselves deeply bound and pledged, individually and collectively, to do all that in us lies to bring this monstrous evil to a termination, while we make the accomplishment of this event the subject of our unceasing prayers. I trust that we shall do all we can to spread more and more widely the detestation of Slavery, never ceasing, even till death, to pursue it to its entire and universal extermination. Let those of us especially who are commencing life, resolve on emulating the great examples which have been set us by men dear

to our hearts ; and who, having begun the mighty struggle before some of us were yet in being, have continued to this day to maintain it with undiminished energy and effect. Let us tread in their steps—let us imbibe their principles—let us emulate their labours and sacrifices and persevering efforts, until we shall have finally wiped away from our beloved country this foul stain which still pollutes her name.

I now conclude with proposing to Your Royal Highness and to this Meeting the following Resolution :

“ That, in the opinion of this Meeting, the bondage in which eight hundred thousand of their fellow subjects are held, is repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, contrary to the soundest maxims of policy, and a gross violation of the principles of humanity and justice ; and that, animated with the hope of being instrumental in putting a period to this state of oppression and suffering, and wiping out this foul reproach to the British name and character, the Meeting now pledge themselves to prosecute the sacred cause they have undertaken, with zeal, activity, and perseverance, until, by the blessing of God on their united efforts, they are enabled to rejoice together in the final accomplishment of their great work of mercy.”

Mr. T. B. MACAULAY.—Had I been requested, Sir, to lend my support to any other resolution than that which has been proposed by my honourable friend, I could not have offered myself to your notice without great reluctance. I should have felt that the cause in which we are engaged, although it could never have a warmer friend, might easily have found a more able and more experienced advocate. I should have thought it advisable that you should be addressed by some gentleman who had distinguished himself in this or in a former great contest for the rights of human nature, rather than by one whose only claim to your attention is de-

rived from services not his own. From these feelings I am relieved by the nature of the present motion. It is a motion which, as I conceive, I can second, not only without presumption, but with peculiar propriety. It is a motion which seems especially to belong to those who are entering on life;—to those who, although they have not contributed to your past success, are ambitious to participate in your future labours. It pledges us to continued exertion :—it announces that even if those, in whose guidance we have hitherto confided, be destined to leave unfinished the work which they have so gloriously begun, the good cause shall not therefore want fresh champions, nor, if it must be so, fresh martyrs. As a friend to humanity, Sir, I cannot look without the greatest satisfaction on such a Meeting assembled for such an object. We hear, indeed, much of the pernicious tendency of these discussions;—we are told that they inflame the passions of the Slave and endanger the person and property of the Master;—we are adjured to take warning by the insurrections of Barbadoes and Demerara;—and these admonitions may have produced an effect on some honourable and benevolent minds. To me it seems somewhat singular, that such assertions should proceed from the same persons by whom we have been assured that the system of Colonial Slavery is the glory of the British name, the envy of the British peasant,—that all its evils exist only in theory,—that in its practical operation it is the greatest of blessings. No assertions, however bold and pertinacious, can possibly obtain credit when they so directly contradict each other. Never was any Government at once so benignant and so insecure;—never were any subjects at once so happy and so turbulent. Abuses merely speculative never yet roused to revolt the great body of any people. An educated man of enlarged views and enthusiastic temper, a Thrasea or a Sydney, may convince himself that one form of government has a greater tendency than another to promote the happiness of mankind; and by such consid-

rations he may be induced to engage in hazardous enterprises. But the multitude is not thus influenced. When *they* are excited to a general revolt, it is not by speeches ; it is not by pamphlets ; it is not by meetings ;—but by physical evils—by sensible privations—by the spoliation of the honest fruits of their industry—by the violation of the sacred ties of nature—by unmeasured exaction—by stripes—by insults—by the strong necessity of famine.—These things sting men to madness. These things turn plough-shares into swords, and pruning-hooks into spears. But when was it ever known that the mere exposure of theoretical evils excited a people to rebellion, while they were enjoying comfort and personal security ? We need not look very far for instances :—observe the state of our own country ! For many years, hundreds have been employed in telling the people of England that they are debarred from their just rights—that they are degraded—that they are enslaved. Every day this is heard—read—believed by thousands. More appeals are made to their passions in a week than to those of the West Indian Slaves in a year. Yet who lives in the apprehension of rebellion ? Who, except in times of temporary distress, expects even a riot ? Who does not know that, while their rights of property, person, and conscience, are protected by law, and while they are well fed and clothed, Cobbett may write away his fingers, and Hunt may talk away his lungs in vain !

And yet, Sir, with this example before us, we are required to believe that men whose situation is infinitely better than that of the English peasant—men whose condition is a realization of Utopia, a renewal of the golden age, an anticipation of the prophetic millennium—cannot safely be permitted to hear a single whisper against the system under which they live. It requires no skilful interpreter to translate these forebodings of danger into confessions of tyranny.—What are we to think of a system which, as its advocates tell us, cannot be discussed without exciting insurrection ? What, again,

are we to think of a system under which insurrections (as its advocates also tell us) cannot be suppressed without massacre? Look at the punishments inflicted a few years back on the insurgents of Barbadoes, and recently on those in Demerara. Where, in the whole history of modern Europe, shall we find an instance in which the destruction of so large a proportion of the population has been deemed necessary for the safety of the survivors? The British subjects of the New World have outdone, immeasurably outdone, all the military despots, all the frantic Jacobins of the Old. Their tender mercies are more cruel than the vengeance of Dundee;—their little fingers are thicker than the loins of Alva;—Robespierre chastised with whips, but they chastise with scorpions. But, we are told, this was not wanton cruelty:—it was indispensably necessary for the peace and safety of the Colonies! Grant it—and what then? Must not every particle of blame which is taken away from the agents be laid on the system? What must be the state of things which makes that wholesome severity, which elsewhere would be diabolical atrocity? What are we to think of the condition of a people, when inflictions so tremendous are necessary to make endurance appear to them a less evil than rebellion? Woe to that society which has no cement but blood! Woe to that Government which, in the hour of success, must not dare to be merciful! I need no other testimony against the Colonists than that with which they themselves furnish us, and that which daily and hourly forces itself on our notice. When I see institutions which tremble at every breath—institutions which depend for support on restless suspicion—on raving calumny—on outrageous persecution—on military force—on infamous testimony—on perverted law—I have no further need of witnesses, or of arguments, to convince me that they must be as flagitious and unjust as are the means by which they are upheld. We hear, indeed, that this system, in theory confessedly odious, is in practice lenient and liberal; and

abundance of local testimony is adduced to this effect. Local testimony is indeed invaluable when it can be obtained unadulterated by local interest and local prejudice; but that it is adulterated I must always believe, when I see that it contradicts great general principles. Is it possible that the power with which the Slave codes invest the Master can be exercised without being perpetually abused? If so, then is there no truth in experience—then is there no consistency in human nature—then is history a fable; and political science a juggle, and the wisdom of our ancestors madness, and the British constitution a name! Let us break up the benches of the House of Commons for firewood, and cut Magna Charta into battledores! These assertions, then, of our opponents are not—they cannot be true; and fortunately it is not merely by reasoning on general principles that we are enabled to refute them. Out of the mouths of our adversaries themselves we can fully show that West Indian Slavery is an evil—a great and fearful evil—an evil without any affinity to good principles, or any tendency to good effects—an evil so poisonous that it imparts to almost every antidote a nature as deadly as its own! When this country has been endangered either by oppressive power or by popular delusion, truth has still possessed one irresistible organ—justice one inviolable tribunal;—that organ has been an English Press—that tribunal an English Jury. But in those wretched islands we see a Press more hostile to truth than any Censor; and Juries more insensible to justice than any Star Chamber. In those islands alone is exemplified the full meaning of the most tremendous of the curses denounced against the apostate Hebrews, “I will curse your blessings!” I have said that this may be proved from the confession of our antagonists. There are few persons present, I presume, who have not bestowed some attention on the case of the late Mr. Smith. We remember—and God Almighty forbid that ever we should forget!—how on that occasion hatred—deep, cunning, rancorous

hatred—regulated every proceeding, was substituted for every law, intruded itself upon the seat of judgment, allowed its victim no sanctuary in the house of mourning, no refuge in the very grave! It is true that the members of that Court Martial have hitherto escaped the stigma of a Parliamentary censure;—it is true that those who had not the hardihood to acquit, had not the virtue to condemn them. But not less true is it that the public has examined the case—has pronounced its damnatory verdict—has passed its sentence, and will assuredly execute it;—and history will doubtless rank the proceedings of that Court with those of the murderous Judges of Latimer and Sydney!

Now, Sir, what was the argument adduced, during the late discussion, by the advocates of the Colonists? What was the reasoning which they opposed to what (if I may venture to add the humble voice of private respect to the blessings of the widow and to the applause of an admiring nation) I would call one of the noblest struggles ever maintained by genius in the cause of liberty, of justice, and of national honour? What was their argument? They positively asserted, they *repeatedly* asserted, that, in their opinion, a Jury composed of Planters would have acted with far more violence and injustice than did this Court Martial—this Court Martial which not one of themselves would defend—this Court Martial which could not find a single lawyer to stake his professional character on the legality of its proceedings. Their argument was this: “Things have doubtless been done which should not have been done; true it is that the Court permitted the Judge Advocate to act in a way totally inconsistent with his office; true it is that they admitted hearsay evidence on one side, and rejected it on the other; they tried a man over whom they had no jurisdiction—they convicted him without satisfactory evidence—they condemned him to a punishment not warranted by law: but we must all make allowances; we must judge by comparison; Mr. Smith had great reason to be thankful; it might have

been much worse. Only think what would have been the case if he had had a Jury of White Planters to try him ! That would surely have been infinitely worse ! ”

Sir, I have always had the happiness of living under the protection of the law of England, and therefore I am utterly unable to imagine what could be worse. But though I have a slender knowledge, I have a large faith. I am by no means so presumptuous as to set any limit to the possible injustice of a West Indian Judicature ; and since the Colonists solemnly assure us that a Jury of their own body not only possibly might, but necessarily must, have acted with more violence and injustice than this Court Martial, I certainly shall not pretend to dispute the assertion, although I am utterly at a loss to conceive the mode.

Therefore, Sir, I am warranted, by the confession of our opponents, in saying that this system ought not to stand ; and, thank God, by the character of the British people I am warranted in saying that it cannot stand. England cannot long tolerate it, without renouncing her claim to her highest and most peculiar distinction. She has, indeed, much in which to glory. She may boast of her ancient laws—of her magnificent literature—of her long list of maritime and military triumphs ;—she may boast of the vast extent and security of her empire ;—but she has still a higher praise :—it is her peculiar glory, not that she has ruled so widely—not that she has conquered so splendidly—but that she has ruled only to bless, and conquered only to spare ! Her mightiest empire is that of her morals, her language, and her laws ;—her proudest victories, those she has achieved over ferocity and ignorance ;—her most durable trophies, those she has erected in the hearts of civilized and liberated nations. The strong moral feeling of the English people—their hatred of injustice—their disposition to make every sacrifice rather than participate in crime ; these have long been their glory, their strength, their safety ! I trust that they will long be so. I trust that Englishmen will feel on this

occasion, as on so many other occasions they have felt, that the policy which justice and mercy recommend, is that which can alone secure the happiness of nations and the stability of thrones.

It is surely delightful, Sir, to look forward to that period when a series of liberal and prudent measures shall have delivered islands, so highly favoured by the bounty of Providence, from the curse inflicted on them by the frantic rapacity of man. Then the peasant of the Antilles will no longer crawl, in listless and trembling dejection, around a plantation from whose fruits he must derive no advantage, and a hut whose door yields him no protection ; but, when his cheerful and voluntary labour is completed, he will return, with the firm step and erect brow of a British citizen, from the field which is his freehold to the house which is his castle. Then those regions where civilization has displayed only its strength, will exhibit also the fruits of its wisdom and its mercy ;—arts—sciences—letters—equal laws—benevolent institutions—the temples of a pure religion—the marts of a legitimate commerce—tribunals where justice may be expected even by a Negro or a Missionary—senates where liberal sentiments and decorous phraseology will have succeeded to the doctrines and language of Buccaneers ! I cannot think these anticipations chimerical, when I reflect on the past condition of our own country, and on the interesting and pathetic event to which, in a great measure, it owes its present blessings. In an Italian Slave Market, a priest observed some children of exquisite beauty exposed for sale. He asked whence they came ; he was told from England. His heart burned within him ; he pitied the misery and degradation of a distant people. As soon as he was raised to the papal throne, he instantly took measures for introducing into this island the Christian religion, and all the moral and political blessings by which that religion has ever been accompanied. We are not exactly informed of the difficulties which he had to encounter, but we know that in every age human nature is the same ;

that in every age it is through hatred and obloquy that the path lies to virtue and to glory. There were probably grave statesmen to suggest that the work of amelioration had better be left to the Wittenagemotes of the Hephtharchy. No doubt there were slave-holders who protested that their Slaves fared more sumptuously than the King of the Lombards. The statue of Pasquin was not then standing in Rome ; but then, doubtless, there were not wanting wits to deride his enthusiasm, and liars to asperse his character. It is not impossible that there may have been found ruffians to pull down his chapels, and forsworn Judges to send his Missionaries to the gallows. However this may have been, we know that he persevered ;—and now look at the result ! Now look at the miserable, the degraded country, the land of the oppressor and the oppressed ! There is freedom in the respiration of its air, and in the very contact of its soil !—Now look at that ocean which then bore to our coast nothing but plunderers, and carried back from it nothing but cargoes of misery and despair. That very ocean now rolls around us at once to enrich and to defend—at once renders our coast every where accessible to commerce, and every where impervious to war. Look at our maritime power—at our commercial opulence—at our martial glory—at the proud list of our great men ; and then reflect from what we were raised, and by what means. These things should inspire us with hope, and not with hope alone. Do we owe so many blessings to the generosity of an ignorant priest in a dark age and a distant country, and shall not we, who live in the full blaze of morals and intellect, exert ourselves for the welfare of those over whose fate we possess an irresistible controul, and in whose wrongs we have most deeply participated ? Again, therefore, and again we pledge ourselves to this good cause. Danger, difficulty, and opposition, shall only animate us to the work. We will consider every success as a presage of final triumph ;—every failure, as a call for redoubled exertions. Slander, enmity, ridicule, we ex-

pect and we despise.—When the Crusader in Tasso lifts his sword to break the enchantment of the haunted forest, gigantic forms surround him—terrible voices menace him—the wind roars—the skies are darkened—the earth shakes beneath his feet;—but the blow is struck, and instantly the sun shines forth—the storm subsides—and the demons fly howling from the spot which they could pollute no longer. We are bound on a higher adventure—we are sworn to undo the spell of a fouler witchcraft;—and it is not by any tempest which the worst arts of our adversaries can conjure up, that we will be turned back from the enterprise. Never, never shall this contest be terminated, but by a decisive victory of those principles of honour, benevolence and freedom, from which alone States can derive a substantial prosperity, and Statesmen an immortal renown!” (*The speaker sat down amidst loud cheering, which lasted several minutes.*)

The motion was then put, and carried unanimously.

**LORD CALTHORPE.**—Sir, I cannot submit to Your Royal Highness and to this numerous Meeting the Resolution which has been submitted to my charge, without declaring the great satisfaction and delight I have felt at the speech we have just heard; and I am well convinced that the high degree of pleasure which it has excited, and which has been so strongly expressed, has been greatly increased by the persuasion of the peculiar gratification which that speech must have afforded to one of this large audience who has naturally the greatest reason to exult in its success. This Society might, indeed, well entertain a warm assurance of a very early triumph of its labours, if we could venture to hope that the children of those who have occupied the foremost ranks in that mighty struggle in which it is engaged, would aid its efforts with but a portion of the ability and eloquence we have just witnessed.

In adverting, Sir, to the great end which this Society has in view, I must express my satisfaction at that passage of its

luminous Report which disclaimed any design to effect a rash and sudden extinction of Slavery in the West Indies,—a charge which has been so studiously but unjustly brought against it; originating with those who were from the first naturally prompted to decry its labours; supported by the interested and delusive colouring that has been given to passing events; and countenanced, I regret to say, in some degree by the language and measures adopted in Parliament during the session which is this day come to a close. But, Sir, in saying this, I am at the same time anxious to do justice to the intentions of His Majesty's Ministers. I agree with my learned friend (Mr. Stephen) in believing that they are sincerely desirous of improving the condition of the Slaves. They have, I am persuaded, wished to maintain what they conceived to be a fair and impartial course between the most strenuous Abolitionists and the West India Planters. But they have, I think, clearly been drawn aside by lending too ready an ear to the suggestions and apprehensions of those to whom if they had formerly listened with equal confidence and credulity, they could never have attained that merit which they have so justly earned by the measures adopted for following up the Act of Abolition, and by exerting the influence and authority of this country, over foreign nations, for ensuring a more general extinction of the Slave Trade. To the same delusive and false impressions, I am, Sir, also inclined to attribute the conduct of His Majesty's Government upon the occasion which has been so frequently alluded to this day, and has drawn to itself so large a measure of public attention. (*Here Dr. Lushington entered, and was received with a loud expression of approbation.*) I am so little disposed to complain of what has just occurred as an interruption, that I rather regard it as a most seasonable illustration of what I was about to mention—the strong sensation occasioned by the exposure of the recent events at Demerara, and the Parliamentary decision upon them; when a majority of the House of Commons virtually resolved to rescue from cen-

sure, proposed in the mildest and least offensive form, those who had passed a sentence awarding that extreme penalty of the law which is reserved for crimes of the deepest dye, to one whose offence was admitted, even by the leading Minister of the Crown in that House, to be substantially this:—that he had placed an excessive and blameable reliance upon the character and disposition of those to whom he stood in the endearing relation of a spiritual teacher and pastor. Sir, in alluding to that much injured individual, as I am called upon to do by the Resolution I hold in my hand, I will not wrong his memory, or the feelings of Your Royal Highness and of those who hear me, by calling for your sympathy for him. If, Sir, we believe him to have been faithful in the discharge of his high office, and that his very faithfulness made him the victim of those by whom his religion was hated,—then, Sir, the state to which we cannot doubt he is now exalted may indeed kindle our hopes—it may animate our faith, but it never can call for our sympathy; and even in proposing that part of my Resolution which expresses our deep concern in the sorrows of her who was the sharer, and is now the survivor, of his wrongs and sufferings, I would ask only for a limited measure of your sympathy. For possessing as we do the strong and unimpeachable testimony of a most respectable clergyman of the Church of England to the valuable labours of this devoted Missionary;—assured as we are by him that, although his spiritual instructions did not preserve all who attended them from engaging in the act of rebellion, yet that they were of such efficacy as to strip that rebellion of the sanguinary character which all former insurrections in Demerara had worn, and to induce the Negroes to spare the lives of those whom they believed to be their oppressors and persecutors. Assured, Sir, I say, that if such was the influence of his pastoral exertions, how justly may we hope that the precepts of such a man have sunk, with a peculiarly healing and consoling power, into the heart of his widowed partner—supplying her with a

full antidote to an affliction like hers, and cheering her heart with the blessed prospect of a reunion with him in that kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness! Sorrows so chastened and softened, demand from us a measured sympathy; but the claims, arising from her circumstances, upon that succour which it is in our power to bestow, will, I doubt not, be fully felt and answered.

Upon another part, Sir, of this Resolution,—that which expresses our gratitude to the individual who brought the proceedings at Demerara before the consideration of Parliament, and to his associates,—I shall say little; not because I think their merits light, but because I am persuaded that, if they require any further recompense for the service they have rendered to the cause of truth, beyond that which they must find in their own hearts, it will have been fully awarded to them by the approving feelings and judgement of the country at large. For to every one who venerates the laws, as framed, not for the infliction, but the redress of injury, and for the protection of liberty; and who regards the study and practice of those laws as a generous and dignified employment;—to every such man it must have been truly gratifying to see so many of those who have either attained, or are advancing to the highest distinctions of that profession, coming forward one after another, and exerting to the utmost their powerful talents and eloquence to repair the outrage offered at Demerara to all law and all justice. For, Sir, what was the cause they there pleaded? The question brought before Parliament did not merely affect a single Colony, or a single Missionary; but it was one involving all the great and essential principles of conscience and of freedom. It was, indeed, of such a nature, that I am quite at a loss to conceive what security those who upon that question voted in the majority, will be able to offer to their constituents or to themselves, that, upon any future occasion on which the forms of law shall be again used for the purposes of the grossest injustice and oppression, they will be found on the side of

the oppressed, or rather not shielding the oppressor. And here, Sir, I cannot but express my regret, that when the most eminent advocates were seen coming forward to rescue the legal profession from the stain which the proceedings at Demerara had cast upon it, those distinguished officers who were conscious of the upright and irreproachable feelings by which they had been influenced whilst sitting upon Courts Martial, did not likewise feel themselves constrained to vindicate that species of tribunal from the stigma affixed to it by these proceedings, as little resembling the acts of an English Court Martial as those of any other British Court of Judicature.

In thus referring to the recent decision of the House of Commons, I have no wish to arraign the motives of any individual who voted in the majority, to whatever profession he may belong. I know how industriously a powerful party in the country has endeavoured to spread a delusion upon all subjects of West India policy, and with what success, that decision, I think, has too fully proved. Put it is that very delusion which this Society has to combat, and, if possible, to dissipate ;—to convince all men that those colonies are suffering under a deadly disease created by Slavery—a disease that can be cured only by the gradual removal of its cause: and surely, Sir, the more we find men of unquestionable probity and principle, out of regard to a particular system and state of things, refusing to censure what no man can justify, the more must that system become an object of distrust and suspicion.

I would also, Sir, apply the same remark even to those who sat upon the Court Martial at Demerara. We are told some of them were men held in high esteem and regard by those who knew them, and considered incapable of acts of injustice and oppression. Yet when we find them grounding such a sentence upon such evidence, what further proof do we require of the vitiating influence of the atmosphere by which they are surrounded, than that it should enslave the consciences of

those who were before upright, and leave them no liberty to be humane and just?

But, Sir, in proportion as I deplore and deprecate such iniquity, I turn with increased relief and satisfaction, from the fluctuations of Parliament and the errors of Cabinets, to that great tribunal to which Parliament and Ministers must at length submit,—the tribunal of the People of England, and by “the People of England” I would be understood to mean, not the low uneducated and unreflecting class of society, but that great and growing mass of intelligence, of wealth, of public and private virtue, and of high religious feeling, which is contained in what is called in this country the Middle Class. They have no interest in this great question, but the eternal and immutable interests of truth and justice;—and they will at length ask themselves, where are the pre-eminent benefits arising from this system, that, for the sake of maintaining it, they should still be called upon to make that large annual pecuniary sacrifice which has been alluded to, and those dearer and costlier sacrifices of humanity and truth. They will not, in the exercise of that equity by which they would be governed, deprive any individual of his own right and possessions hastily and inconsiderately, even though he should be a West Indian proprietor and owner of Slaves. But, accustomed to associate with the name of the British Constitution ideas of beneficence, they will not calmly suffer their Government to be reviled and defied by dependent Colonies when called upon to act in the spirit of that beneficence; still less will they endure such scorn and contumacy, when practised under the mask and boast of the forms of an English Constitution. And whenever they shall be asked, in time to come, to confide in Assemblies and Tribunals in the West Indies, because they bear names which command their respect and affection, then the People of England will bear in mind that the Court Martial at Demerara was compared to an English Court Martial, and to an English Court of Jus-

—inquiry : but before that investigation takes place, and whilst there is yet room for the existence of some prejudice, they will feel it to be no violation of the equity they will surely maintain, if that prejudice should be in favour of Liberty, and against Slavery.

The Noble Lord concluded with moving :

“That this Meeting, in common with the Nation at large, view with sorrow and indignation the gross violation of law and justice exhibited at Demerara in the trial and conviction of Mr. Smith the Missionary ; and while they express their detestation of the cruelty and oppression to which he fell a victim, they are anxious at the same time to testify their cordial sympathy with his afflicted widow, on account of the severe sufferings she experienced while sharing her husband’s imprisonment, and the irreparable loss she has sustained by his untimely death. Nor do they feel it a duty less incumbent on them to pay their heartfelt tribute of applause to Henry Brougham, Esq. and his associates in Parliament, who have so nobly and effectually vindicated the character of the traduced and persecuted Missionary, and whose splendid and successful efforts, in exposing oppression and asserting the cause of truth, innocence, and justice, entitle them to the gratitude of their country and of mankind \*.”

Mr. MONEY, M.P.—Sir, it requires no little resolution to stand up in such an assembly as this, after the great powers which we have seen exhibited this day, and particularly by the son of one who has the delight and the glory of sharing the labours of a Wilberforce and a Stephen in this great cause. But I have been called on

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\* See Note at the end of the Proceedings.

to second the Resolution proposed by the Noble Lord. And, after the decision of the House of Commons with respect to Mr. Smith, or I should rather say the shrinking from a decision, (to which some persons did me the injustice to make me a party,) I should feel that I was a coward if I did not obey the call. But while I most cordially subscribe to all the sentiments which are embodied in this most important Resolution, I feel that I should ill consult the interest of the Society, of which this is the first Annual Meeting (and I believe that there never has been an example of any first anniversary of any Society so attended and so graced), I feel, Sir, that I should do injustice to that great cause of justice and humanity, of God and man, which we are this day met to promote, if I were, by occupying your time at any length, to weaken (as I certainly should do) the impression that must have been made on your minds and your hearts by the eloquent and powerful appeals which have been addressed to them. But this I must say, Sir, that it is only by assembling in such Meetings as these, and fully and fearlessly expressing our opinions, and thus becoming the medium of exciting corresponding sentiments and feelings throughout the land, that that foul stain can be effaced from the British name which has been inflicted on it by the barbarous treatment, the long and lingering and painful trial, the monstrous and intolerable sentence, the imprisonment even unto death, of that excellent minister of the Gospel Mr. Smith. It is the unimpeachable evidence of the respectable chaplain of the colony, (although that gentleman, Mr. Austin, had previously no intimacy with Mr. Smith, but on the contrary entertained a prejudice against him,)—it is his unimpeachable testimony that it was to be attributed to the influence and the instructions of this martyred Missionary, that, for the first time in the history of Slave insurrections, the revolt in Demerara was bloodless in intention at least, and that the lives of the very men had been saved who thirsted for his own. With respect to another

and a most affecting part of the Motion which I hold in my hand, wherein we are called on to express our sympathy with Mr. Smith's unhappy widow, I do confidently trust that that sympathy will not be confined to expression alone, but that a Nation's charity will provide for her. Her loss is not to be supplied; and her sufferings on account of it are only to be mitigated by Him who has promised to succour and console the widow and the fatherless. With the sentiments expressed by the Noble Lord who preceded me, as to the concluding part of the Report, I most entirely concur. No language of mine can possibly add the slightest force to the deserved tribute that has here been paid to those distinguished members of the British Parliament who have vindicated the murdered innocence of Mr. Smith and the violated laws of their country. They are justly entitled to the gratitude of every British heart, and it will not be withheld from them.—I conclude with seconding the Motion of the Noble Lord.

The Motion was carried unanimously.

Dr. LUSHINGTON.—Sir, I deeply lament the absence of my honourable friend, Mr. Brougham, who would in terms infinitely more strong than any I can use have expressed his warm gratitude for the vote which this Meeting has in its kindness been pleased to pass. I know that he would have attended on the present occasion, but that, from circumstances he has not been able to controul, he has been prevented from carrying his intention into execution. Nothing can be more gratifying to my feelings than to know that the humble part which I took in the discussion of the ever-memorable transactions of Demerara, has met with the approbation of this Meeting and of the Country. It will to my dying day be a source of consolation and rejoicing, that some little at least was done to vindicate the honour of the British name from that foul stain which the proceedings at Demerara, from their commencement to their close, have necessarily cast

upon it. I was anxious to discharge my duty, not from any desire or wish to signalize myself in a memorable debate, but because I had read and studied the evidence, and had come to the conviction which I now again profess,—the conviction of the entire innocence of Mr. Smith, who fell a victim to the mockery of justice! Many, I trust, will find the leisure and the patience to read and consider the voluminous proceedings connected with his trial; their time will be well spent, and the result, I am confident, will be, in the judgement of every candid man, that, so far was Mr. Smith from having deserved the slightest censure, his conduct throughout the whole of his career at Demerara was marked by the strictest attention to his religious duties, and by the most circum-spect and prudent demeanour. It was not to be supposed that being a daily eye-witness of all the atrocities which are innate in the system of Slavery, and which were every day distressing his feelings and wounding his heart, it was not to be supposed he could be a tame spectator of scenes like these, and that he should not commit to his private journal the reflections which such scenes must necessarily ever produce in the mind of a man of religion and humanity. Could he, Sir, have been a tame spectator of these daily atrocities? Could he have seen without emotion the unfortunate victims of this diabolical system abridged of their opportunities of attending religious worship, their only consolation amid the miseries by which they were surrounded? When he saw those who are allowed no hope on this side of the grave restricted from seeking comfort and peace from hope beyond it,—was he not to feel, as every individual whom I have the honour to address must feel, strong indignation, although he had the circumspection to keep it within his own bosom? I doubt much, Sir, had I been placed under the same circumstances with Mr. Smith, if I could have restrained myself from loudly proclaiming, to the public and to the world, the abhorrence I felt at seeing tyranny, cruelty, and oppression, thus predomi-

nating over every feeling that ought to actuate the human conduct.

Now, Sir, in adverting to the object of this Meeting, I am desirous to declare my firm opinion that it is the *abolition* of Slavery we must seek, and that all attempts to ameliorate the condition of the Slaves, unless the ultimate result be the entire abolition of the state itself, will prove vain and perplexing. It is my firm conviction, after much and anxious deliberation on the subject, that the power has not been given by God to man of framing a code of Slavery. I believe it to be impossible, if all were actuated by the best dispositions and the best feelings,—I believe it to be impossible to frame a system of Slave Laws in which injustice, oppression and abuse would not of necessity exist.—The truth is, Sir, that when God made men, he made them not to be Slaves; and if we examine the subject even with the slightest degree of care, we shall be forced to acknowledge the truth of this proposition. How is it possible to regulate, by any code of law whatever, in a state of Slavery such as exists in our Colonies, the connexion which subsists between husband and wife—between father and son—between brother and sister? How indeed, in any system of Slavery, is it possible, by law, to prevent all those best feelings and affections of our nature, which arise out of these relations, from being daily violated and weakened, if not ultimately destroyed? How can the affections of the parent for his children, and the desire to rear them up, from infancy to manhood and to womanhood, in virtue—in honour—honesty and truth,—how can such sentiments be cherished, so as to produce their proper fruit, when these children remain at the mercy of another, exposed to his violence and caprice—exposed to ill usage without cause—exposed to all the numberless violations of decency and of virtue which ever have been, and ever will be, the effects of a state of Slavery? Slavery has never existed in the world, or in any quarter of it, either before Christianity or since, in which the vices of the Slaves, and the vices of the

Master in his conduct towards the Slaves, have not formed prominent and characteristic features of the history of the times which were polluted by its prevalence. I say the vices of the Masters—for let it not be supposed that all the vices and all the crimes incident to this unhappy state fall to the lot of the Slave alone. The mind of the Master, cursed with the possession of despotic power, becomes debased and hardened. Those principles which would have flourished in a better soil, and in a purer atmosphere, are perverted or eradicated by the very possession of such boundless power, and by the scenes of degradation to which he sees its hapless victims daily subjected. I remember, Sir, an admirable passage in one of Lord Grenville's speeches on the abolition of the Slave Trade, which applies most forcibly to the present case. He was answering one of those arguments which had been so often adduced by the advocates of that traffic, namely, that the barbarities of the Slave Trade must have been greatly exaggerated, because Englishmen, famed for their humanity, could not have been present, could not have perpetrated, nay, could not have endured them; and after he had refuted that specious argument, by proving the facts to demonstration, he then added, "I would not trust myself if similarly circumstanced—I know that the human mind is so framed, that it becomes contaminated by the repetition of vice in its presence—I know that if cruelty be repeated daily before my eyes, my feelings would be hardened and my sense of their barbarity weakened!" Thus it is; and in the common experience of us all, we know that that which we daily see produces less and less effect, until at last the mind becomes totally corrupted by the daily spectacle of that which, when seen for the first time, excites alarm and indignation, and from which we turn with the deepest abhorrence. Sir, with respect to the means by which these great objects are to be obtained, I conceive that the first point is to raise the condition of the Slave himself, so as to prepare him for

freedom with as much expedition as possible. It is not a question of expense—it is not a question of commercial benefit: the simple question is, how we can most speedily make amends for our long perseverance in a course of crime—how we can with the greatest facility relieve the British name and character from the pollution and the odium of this detestable system! I think no sacrifice too great, I think no measure too precipitate, which can produce as speedily as possible the great end to be attained. I mean not to say (and let me not be understood as saying) that the immediate emancipation of the Negroes would be a blessing to them, or that it is possible under existing circumstances; but I do mean to say that we should never for one moment lose sight of these principles; that we should never suffer ourselves to consider a state of Slavery as permanently to be endured, or to be endured longer than the well being of the Slave himself may render necessary; and that we should never omit any means or any opportunity of accelerating its ultimate extinction.

Now, Sir, I hold in my hand a Resolution which to read to the Meeting will be sufficient to answer for its favourable reception. I hold in my hand a vote of Thanks to one who, in the recent transactions at Demerara, signalized himself by conduct above all thanks. Thus it is that, in the benignant dispensations of Providence, it seldom happens that there is any great and violent outrage, any signal violation of those principles which, as Britons and as Christians, we must uphold and admire; which is not attended by some illustrious instance of virtue and courage, some eminent act of devotion to the sacred and paramount obligations of truth and justice. Sir, I hold in my hand a vote of Thanks to the Rev. Mr. Austin, the Chaplain of the Colony of Demerara. And whether we look to the situation he held, connected with the Government of that country—connected with the Governor who ordered the Court Martial—connected with all the Planters, who conceived it was for their interest that a judicial murder should be committed;—or whether

we look to that unfortunate separation which sometimes exists between ministers of different sects and persuasions in religion;—we shall find that all those motives which were calculated to draw a man aside from his strict duty, so far from having discouraged him, appear rather to have confirmed him in the path of humanity and of virtue. He dared persecution when persecution was at its height—he dared the anger of the Planter, although he saw that there was no species of injustice which it scrupled to perpetrate—to defeat that injustice he dared disgrace and disfavour with all those with whom he was associated, and set at nought all his prospects of advantage in that settlement; and he took upon himself the task, from the commencement of the trial until the death of the sufferer, to be his comforter, aider and supporter, as far as it was in his power to be so. A greater temptation to have swerved from duty, but a more faithful performance of duty, the annals of heroic virtue never exhibited. I feel a pride and a glory in knowing that he was a minister of the Church of England. I feel pride and glory in thinking that that fervent charity, which ought to pervade men of every name in the Christian Religion, glowed in his heart, and guided his actions throughout all these proceedings. God grant that his example may shine forth with an irresistible influence in other parts of those ill-fated regions where Slavery still prevails with all its abominations; and that those who are now about to be sent forth to administer religious light and consolation to the poor Slaves, may endeavour to emulate that bright example which Mr. Austin has set, and become co-operators with Christian ministers of every description in the great work of communicating to their dark minds a knowledge of the Word of God! Sir, if it should so happen that the tide of persecution should run so strong that Mr. Austin should be driven from the Colony which he now inhabits (and of which, as I understand, he is actually a Planter—a prejudice which he has overcome)—if he should be driven from his home and reduced to the ne-

cessity of seeking shelter in this country; I trust that we shall all be prepared to welcome him with open hearts—that we shall maintain and sustain him in case of need—that we shall not allow him to suffer in that cause in which he has already endured much; but that, by our conduct towards him, we shall hold out, to all others who may be similarly circumstanced in time to come, the assurance that the British Nation, not only by its applause and commendation, but by its hearty and sincere efforts to assist and remunerate, if need be, those who make sacrifices to truth, humanity and justice, will not leave them to ruin and distress.

Sir, I will take my leave of these melancholy scenes. I regret to state that the failure of the Motion (proposed by Mr. Brougham in the House of Commons) has left, I think, too great an opening for the recurrence of scenes which never could have been acted in any country under heaven, where the British dominion is established, save in countries where that dominion is found disgraced by the existence of Slavery. In no other part of the world, where the British dominion has prevailed, do we know of an instance of complicated wrong and injustice to be put in competition with it for an hour. We have heard of acts of sudden atrocity—we have heard of acts of a capricious nature; but we never have before heard of a trial like this, lasting for nearly three months, and protracted with a deliberation and ingenuity of injustice beyond all parallel. We have never yet known *one* instance in British history, at all to be compared with it, of vengeance, after death had closed the scene. We have never heard, in the most distant Colonies where the power of the British name is known, of any thing like preventing a widow from attending the funeral of her deceased husband—or giving orders to prostrate the sad memorial erected, in the fullness of honest affection and gratitude, by those who felt they owed to him who was gone, all that they most valued in life. Nothing like this has ever disgraced the British name before, and I trust that a similar outrage

will never again disgrace it. But, Sir, one reflection more, and I have done. If there can have been such iniquitous proceedings as these in the case of an Englishman and a Freeman—if such practices, even as they respect him, can exist and go unpunished—what must be the destiny of the unfortunate Slaves who are subjected to the dominion and controul of the same individuals? What hope of mercy can they indulge, when they see no mercy shown to one who came from the same place of birth—who is of the same privileged class—of the same colour—of the same religion—with whom many of them had lived in habits at least of acquaintance, if not of friendship? What hope can the Negroes have, I will not say of justice, but of any thing approaching to it, in a land where the unfortunate prevalence of Slavery has converted an Englishman into an example of injustice unknown to any other part of the British empire? I was about to use still stronger expressions, but I desist. I am desirous not to use stronger terms than are necessary to express in appropriate language the indignation, the horror which I feel, in common with the Country at large, of practices so abhorrent to our natures.

Now, Sir, I will conclude with thanking the Meeting for the attention with which they have heard me; and I entreat every individual whom I now see, not to suffer the impression made upon him by this Meeting to be soon effaced, but to bear in mind that they have not been listening to an interesting fiction, but to a representation of real scenes founded on damning facts; but that at the very hour I am speaking, in other lands which, though distant, are subject to our sway, that very bondage exists in all its plenitude of misery, the practice of which has called forth our horror and detestation. Let me entreat them not to allow the business or the pleasures of the day to lead them to forget what they have heard—not to allow their feelings and sympathies to evaporate in unavailing regrets, or in the mere expression of condolence; but so to lay them up in their

hearts, that they may be animated to ceaseless efforts, until they shall have succeeded (as eventually I trust they will) in the complete annihilation of the whole monstrous system. Let them urge one another to those exertions which may be best calculated to facilitate the end so ardently desired. Let them teach even their little children to lisp that abhorrence of Slavery, in this and in every quarter of the globe, which so well becomes the mouths of Englishmen. Let us not, then, I earnestly entreat, permit these feelings to be extinguished when this day has passed; but let us employ every possible expedient warmly to foster them, until they shall have enabled us to bring to maturity those plans which our judgements, our hearts and our consciences equally approve of. Let us urge the cause forward by argument. Let us not forget it, but keep it continually in view. Where we find persons ignorant of these scenes of distress, let us give them knowledge. When we find persons under mistaken impressions as to the possibility of remedying the evil, let us impart to them juster views. When we find persons insensible to the claims of humanity, let us place before them the certainty of the existence of those scenes of which we have had only one specimen in Demerara; and let us urge them to discharge their duty as men and as Christians. Sir, I cannot believe that all this will fail. I cannot believe that an all-wise and benevolent Providence has intended that all that accumulation of misery and of vice, of which Slavery is the parent, should continue to be coexistent with the greatness and glory of the English nation. No: it is a disgrace, whatever may be the cost, which we are bound to wipe away. And most firmly do I believe, that by earnest, active, and sedulous exertion—by boldness tempered with circumspection—by energy and perseverance, we shall at length accomplish the great object of our desire, and eradicate for ever this accursed bane from every spot within the British empire. (*Loud cheers.*)

The Resolution, Sir, I have to move is,

“That this Meeting are desirous of expressing their unfeigned esteem and admiration of the Rev. W. S. Austin, Chaplain of the Colony of Demerara, whose conduct in the case of the Missionary, Mr. Smith, has exhibited a signal display of active benevolence, of inflexible adherence to the cause of truth and justice, and of unshaken intrepidity in the defence of innocence, calumniated by prejudice and oppressed by power.”

MR. WILLIAM SMITH.—Sir, at this period of the afternoon, if much had been left to be said on this last subject which has been so ably treated by my honourable and learned friend, I should, I confess, have felt myself extremely embarrassed how to proceed. But when I consider how fully the ears of this assembly have been saturated with eloquence, and, how much at the same time their judgements have been enlightened by every argument that could have been brought to bear on the subject, I feel that my task is indeed easy, and that I need offer to the assembly little more than the expression of the pleasure with which I second the Motion of my honourable and learned friend. There are only one or two incidental points on which I would wish to detain this Meeting for a moment. I cannot however but observe how little chance of a fair trial Mr. Smith could have had in Demerara, when the character given of his tribunal was, that, even allowing its obvious faults, “It was better than that of the Planters.” That such a character of it should have been given by the King’s Governor of the Colony, and he himself too a Planter, one would have thought almost impossible. But when we consider the subsequent proceedings with respect to Mr. Austin, not merely in themselves, but as exhibiting the state of mind and temper prevailing in the Colony, what an overwhelming degree of prejudice must Mr. Smith have laboured under, and how difficult must it have been to have brought forward any witnesses in his defence! When we see what species

of treatment that man met with whose honesty was capable of braving any danger in support and in defence of innocence and of truth, it becomes evident that under almost any Constitution of the Court, in that place and under those circumstances, the issue of the trial might, without any great chance of error, have been predicted.

I must also, Sir, make one further observation.—We have been accustomed to think that it is by instruction that the Slaves are best to be fitted for the reception of freedom, and especially by instruction in the doctrines and morals of Christianity. I am fully persuaded of the truth of this opinion; but I must, for these unhappy beings, lay in a claim on another ground. As some compensation for injuries committed, we owe them the attempt to confer every benefit in our power; but still, should we fail to bring one single Slave to the profession of the truths of Christianity, or to the enjoyment of its promises,—not one iota the less do we owe freedom to every Slave we possess. His right to himself does not depend on his conversion; nor although he should continue a Heathen to the day of his death, would the injustice of our detaining him in Slavery be at all diminished. But if Christianity be the best (as I believe it to be,) and perhaps the only adequate mode of rescuing them from their present degradation, into what a dilemma has the Colony of Demerara thrown itself on this point! They have expelled all the Missionaries in the person of Mr. Smith, and the whole Church of England (as I should imagine) in the person of Mr. Austin. For where, Sir, is the Minister of our Church who would incur the hazard of going to preach Christianity in a Colony, where, if he follows the noble example of his predecessor, and dares to obtrude his testimony, though even to prevent the shedding of innocent blood, on a Court of Justice which is unprepared from prejudice, and indisposed from inclination to receive it, he shall be immediately expelled that Colony, with unmerited disgrace, with universal insult, and almost by actual violence.

Sir, in such a case as this, it is difficult to divine where they will obtain instructors,—where they are to seek for Ministers; and I am afraid that the Slaves, if not the Masters, must remain Heathens still. And if this is to be the case, an appeal may be made to the British Parliament, to know whether, if a Colony acts in this manner, and deprives itself of the means of all rational and moral improvement,—if it deprives itself voluntarily of these advantages—it is to be suffered to go on thus? Is it to be permitted them to make a continual progress in a line the very opposite to every truth which Christianity teaches? That appeal, Sir, if necessary, will, I hope, ere long be preferred, and not in vain; but even if that should fail, there would still remain to us a confidence in the merciful interference of that Power whose justice no oppressor can elude, and whose arm is not shortened that it cannot save.

The Motion was then put, and carried unanimously.

MR. WILBERFORCE.—Sir, before I proceed to the Motion which has been committed to me, may I be permitted to fulfill a promise which I made to an absent friend, concerning whom it must be needless to assure the Meeting, that unavoidable hindrances have alone detained him from us, when I state the name of Buxton? He requested me to declare, if he should be unable to be present this day, that insuperable obstacles alone prevented his attendance. I should begin, Sir, by offering an apology for trespassing at all upon the time of the Meeting at this late period of the day, were it not that the Motion with which I shall conclude will abundantly plead my excuse were I to detain you much longer than I mean to do. Let me begin by expressing the delight with which I have witnessed the proceedings of this day, in which our great cause has proved, by the composition of the Meeting that I see around me, to have obtained a degree of personal and moral strength which must ensure its final and decisive triumph. It was wisely resolved, Sir, not to trust to individual

zeal and individual effort for accomplishing the purpose we have in view. Engaging in a struggle which might be of no short continuance, and which called for prudence no less than for zeal, it was certainly wise to constitute the friends of our cause into a Society. It cannot be necessary for me to particularize all the advantages we shall derive from this arrangement. Individuals sometimes faint and grow weary with unexpected difficulties which obstruct their course, and retard the attainment of their wishes : but in a Society, while the warmth of all is maintained and quickened by mutual sympathy, the zeal of some is sobered by the prudence of others, the field of operation is enlarged, and an uniformity of counsel and of purpose is preserved and continued, if it be necessary, even through successive generations of individuals. In the instance of so great a cause as ours, it is by a Society that its interests can be best promoted, and its success the most confidently ensured. And how can we doubt the success, when we recollect the object we have in view, and the country to which we belong ; when we call to mind, that Providence has graciously placed us in a land in which to go about formally to prove, by arguments, that Slavery is an insupportable evil, is almost like endeavouring to prove a self-evident proposition, which by our labour only becomes more obscure. Every man is endowed with various faculties, for the use of which he is responsible to his Creator. He has no right to transfer that responsibility to another ; and for another to take it away from him, except for some crime that justifies such a punishment, is a downright infringement on the rights of God, as well as an usurpation of the rights of man. Truly indeed was it affirmed by my honourable and learned friend near me, whose natural love of liberty has been increased from his acquaintance with British laws, that Slavery in any condition and any form is insufferable, because it is in fact to give to man that which the corrupt nature of man ought not to possess,—absolute and uncontrolled power over a fellow creature. But if this be true with

Slavery in general, the Slavery of the West Indies has all those circumstances by which Slavery itself can be rendered more grievous, and indeed utterly intolerable ; and in which there are none of those correctives to be found, which, under other circumstances, might have been afforded. The scene of West Indian Slavery is at an immense distance from us, where, alas ! the cries of the wretched sufferers can never reach our ears, nor their galled bodies exhibit the marks of repeated punishment to our offended eyes. Their very colour, their features, and various other peculiarities of a physical nature, tend but too powerfully to extinguish sympathy, —that fellow feeling which is perhaps the foundation of all humanity. They who remember the commencement of our long contest, for the abolition of the Slave Trade, will recollect that it was maintained, not merely by the bigoted zealots of the party, but by a grave historian, that the Negroes were not entitled to the rank of human beings ; and a theory was attempted to be formed in explanation of the assertion. But, blessed be God ! that flimsy cobweb was soon brushed away. It was inconsistent with the plainest language of the Word of God, no less than destructive of the just claims of man ; and it was forced to hide its head in shame, or only to be remembered as one of the base artifices and falsehoods in which self-interest sometimes drives men to seek a refuge, but which leave them in the end to confusion and shame. But it is unnecessary for me to enter into the particulars of West Indian Slavery, and to show why they render it less tolerable than any other form of vassalage ; because the very individuals themselves who defended it, now concede to us that which will compel every British mind to account the system itself indefensible. For, Sir, I had almost said that the very defence of that system, which is set up by our opponents, is almost more insulting and provoking than many of the evils themselves which have called forth our pity. They conceive that they make out their case, if they can ex-

establish it as a fact that the Slaves, in general, have a sufficiency of food and clothing, and when they are not subjected to a greater degree of labour than their bodily constitution enables them to bear—in short, when the Slave has the ordinary sufficiency of comfort for one of an inferior species, for a mere brute animal. Our opponents forget that the Negro is, like ourselves, a being formed for immortality; that the Almighty has given him mental faculties like our own; that he has given him human dispositions and feelings; and consequently they forget the Slave's right to all those personal and social blessings by which the Almighty has infused, as it were even into the cup of sorrow, some merciful drops to cheer the life of man, no less than he has held out to him the blessed promises and hopes of a future state. They forget the Slave's right to Christian marriage; a condition originally instituted by the Almighty at the creation of the world, in continuing the species, to provide for its moral instruction, and for the instilling of domestic feelings and social principles through successive generations. Their claim to education and to religious instruction is forgotten. All these rights have been denied; and it has been held by those who defend the system, that the Slave, like his fellow brute, should be contented if he has a requisite allowance of food and clothing. "They have enough to satisfy their hunger and their thirst, and are secured from the inclemencies of the weather, and have due medical care; and surely they ought to be contented." No, Sir, we at least were not contented. Early in the contest we obtained for them the recognition of their claim to the character of human beings; and now we are wishing and confidently hoping to obtain for them, at no distant period of time I trust, the universal acknowledgement of their civil rights. Let us but persevere with sobriety and prudence, and we cannot but succeed in the pursuit in which we are engaged. We have had much to encounter, we may have much to encounter still; but in the end we must succeed.

To those who are accustomed to look around them and observe the course of human affairs, it must, I think, appear, that when Providence means to bless mankind with any great improvement, circumstances take place, and agents come forward, adapted to the accomplishment of the intended purpose. They may be considered as the signs of the times which indicate the change that is about to take place. And so, Sir, at the present moment, there are various circumstances that tend to cheer our hearts, and to encourage us under all the opposition we are experiencing, and all the power and influence by which we are opposed. Many of these signs I might specify; but there is one which on this day especially I cannot but be led to recognise, and which is peculiarly delightful to my mind—I mean that extraordinary display of youthful talent, the exertion of which is still warming the hearts of all who are present, and who have witnessed that rare combination of youthful ardour and eloquence, associated with mature sense and rich stores of knowledge, which we have this day heard. May not we receive this as a good omen,—as an indication that Providence means to bless our cause, when it employs such agents as these to carry it forward? This exhibition could not but be peculiarly delightful to me, and excite a more than ordinary warmth in my bosom, from the personal interest which, from feelings of friendship, I cannot but take in all that concerns the youth whom we have heard with such surprise and admiration. May I, Sir, be permitted to confess, that while I listened to that display of superior talent, I could not help thinking that my dear friend, the parent of that youth, was more than repaid for all the labours and all the sufferings which his superior services for our great cause have drawn upon him; I could not but think, that he would willingly experience all the base falsehoods, all the vile calumnies, all the detestable artifices which have been urged against him, to render him, like another Mr. Smith, the martyr and victim of our cause,—aye, and ten times

more,—for the gratification he has this day enjoyed, in hearing one so dear to him plead such a cause in such a manner. Surely Heaven favours our cause when it provides such advocates for it. It is a striking dispensation of Providence that my dear friend should, in the person of his own son, have such a successor. I am reminded, Sir, that in ancient history a great monarch, Philip of Macedon, was stabbed when he was advancing in his course of victories;—and my friend's enemies are stabbing his reputation, as, if he were in the West Indies, they would probably deal with himself, or at least do as bad, cause him to be tried by a Court-Martial;—but as we may remember that Philip was succeeded by an Alexander, so, if my friend were removed, we see that he would have a successor to obtain a still greater and more glorious triumph.—But I am detaining the Meeting too long—let me proceed to my proper business. The Motion I have to make is, That we tender to Your Royal Highness our cordial acknowledgements for the zealous and undeviating support which you have uniformly given to the principles on which the Society is founded, and for the gratifying kindness with which you have honoured us in taking the Chair on this occasion. This is one of the many similar instances which manifest Your Royal Highness's attachment to those principles of true liberty, which are the honour of the family to which you belong, as well as the glory of the British Constitution. It is a singular blessing, Sir, to a community, when those who are placed by Providence in so elevated and conspicuous a situation as that which you occupy, recognise the true use to be made of their rank, and the duties which properly devolve on them; and when they prove themselves sensible that they are raised to their high eminence, not so much for their own gratification, as for the purpose of being more extensively useful to their fellow creatures; that they are placed as it were on a pedestal, not merely that they may be objects to all around them to be gazed at with stupid admiration, but to be looked up to with

thankfulness as the benefactors of mankind ;--and when they show, like Your Royal Highness, that, raised to a higher level, they are not rendered giddy by the elevation, nor are they at such a height as not to see the scene below them with distinctness, but that the effect is, to open a wider field to their view, and supply them with a wider range of objects on which to exert their benevolence. You, Sir, not satisfied with benefiting your fellow-creatures at home, have looked across the Atlantic, and have seen those poor despised and degraded Slaves, not to be despised and neglected by you, but, on the contrary, to be raised by you from the depression to which they had been degraded ; to be raised to the privileges of men, and to the blessings of Christianity. Be this, Sir, your glory—a greater and a brighter I cannot wish you to enjoy. And I will only add, that I trust, Sir, you may live, when they who are at my time of life will probably be gone from this earthly scene, to witness the complete triumphs which you may hereafter behold ; and when they who, if I may use the expression, have this day won their spurs, will achieve their decisive victory in the field of true glory. My dear friend who last addressed you is, like myself, a veteran in this service. We have been engaged in many a long and arduous contest, and we also have had to contend with calumny and falsehood ; but we are more than repaid, by the success that has already attended our efforts, and by the anticipations which we may derive from what we have witnessed on this very day, when, if our sun be setting, we see that other luminaries are arising to shine with far greater lustre and more efficient strength. Let me now read the Motion which I have to propose. I move

“ That the most cordial acknowledgements of this Meeting be respectfully presented to the President of this Society, His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, for the zealous and undeviating support he has uniformly given to those principles on which the Society is founded, for the gratifying

promptitude with which he has afforded to its objects the honour and benefit of his distinguished patronage ; for his kindness in accepting the Chair this day ; and for his able conduct therein."

**Mr. WILLIAM ALLEN.**—I shall trespass on the patience of this highly respectable Meeting at the close of this triumphant day (for so I call it) but for a very few minutes. I merely rise because it is customary to second a Motion that has been made ; not that it is necessary to say much upon it. Indeed, there is nothing left for me to say, but simply to second it. There is, however, one observation which I will make, and which I wish to press on this highly respectable auditory, before we separate ; and it is this,—that all the good we have heard-of this day, and all that is contemplated, will depend on the exertions which shall be made, throughout the kingdom, by such respectable persons as those whom I have now the pleasure of addressing. It has been stated that Government itself is disposed to put an end to all this misery and to all this horror. I verily believe, at the same time, that Government is surrounded with difficulties in prosecuting its benevolent purpose ; and it is for you to remove some of those difficulties, by every one exerting himself at his post to diffuse light and information on the subject within the utmost range of his influence ; and then, when the Colonies come to Ministers for support to the system of Slavery, they will turn to them and say, "It is impossible to bolster up your system any longer ; for the people of England will not endure it."

I who have been an eye witness, for many years, of the exertions of the Royal and distinguished Chairman in the cause of humanity ; who have seen him always comforting us with his presence—always encouraging us—always aiding us with his counsel and his influence on this great subject ;—I have peculiar satisfaction in seconding the Motion of Thanks to him. I know it will be unani-

mous, and I beg that we may all express our concurrence in it by rising.

Upon this Motion being put, it was carried unanimously by the audience, who had simultaneously arisen, with loud and continued cheering.

His Royal Highness the DUKE of GLOUCESTER, when the applause had subsided, addressed the Meeting to the following effect :—

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is impossible for me, even at this late period of the afternoon, not to trespass on your time for a very few minutes, to give vent to those feelings which I should be the most ungrateful man alive, if they did not press themselves strongly on my breast ; those feelings of gratitude for the Resolution just agreed to, worded in terms, and received in a manner so truly flattering to me. It has been proposed to you by my honourable friend, and seconded by another good friend of mine, two persons, with whom I have during seventeen years laboured in this great cause. My honourable friend has offered it to your notice with the kindest and most flattering expressions towards me ; but at the same time he has said that his sun is now setting. I hope not : I trust we shall long and long possess him who has been the leader in this great and glorious cause, and in which we are merely his followers. You have been pleased to express your approbation of my conduct, and of my feeling and following the principles of justice on which this Society is founded. Could I be one of the House of Brunswick, which was called to this country for the protection of your liberties, and for the support of the freedom of this nation, did I not entertain those principles ? Nay, could I be an Englishman if I did not ? Our cause is the cause of God ; it is the cause of our Constitution, for I cannot and never will admit, that Slavery can ever lawfully exist under our happy, glorious, and blessed Constitution. I think it was the third Resolution in which we have agreed to persevere in the cause we have undertaken, and I trust that in that perseverance reason

will be our guide, although we must show a determination to persevere steadily in our course, and prove that nothing can abate our zeal; that nothing can check our determined endeavours to attain the object which we have in view. At the same time, I hope that there will be no expression or intimation go forth which can produce the impression that of the measures which we mean to adopt, any thing like injustice is to form a part: in our great cause the word "injustice" cannot be known. That those who have acted under a system which unhappily has been sanctioned, and is still sanctioned, by this country, and who may suffer from the abolition of Slavery, are entitled to compensation, when the period comes, when that happy moment shall arrive, in which we shall see emancipation given to the Slaves, *I must decidedly declare*, and I hope you will all agree. No man can wish, indeed, for *immediate* Emancipation; it can only be done gradually: but when I say gradually, I trust that although it should be done gradually, yet the time is not very remote when we shall have obtained that great object. Most entirely do I agree in what my learned and honourable friend stated, that we are not merely to look to amelioration, but that we must look forward to the freedom of the Slave,—that the word "Slavery" must not exist. We must however prepare the Negroes for receiving so great a blessing, because to give those liberty who are not prepared to receive it would be as cruel to themselves, as it would be unjust to their Masters, and dangerous to the State. We must begin by ameliorating their condition; we must do this immediately; there must be no time lost in doing it, not one moment. But the very argument that is adduced in favour of the necessity of preparing the present Slaves, for such an alteration in their condition, proves that there can be no excuse whatever for allowing the next generation to remain uneducated; nay, is it not a strong reason why we should determine that the next generation should not be born in Slavery? The very argument that the present genera-

tion, from not having had moral culture, are unfit for liberty, and that it must take time to prepare *them* for it, is, I think, the strongest argument for preventing the next generation from being born Slaves.—It is a very extraordinary fact (and it shows that the Negroes are very far from being what they are represented to be)—it is a very extraordinary fact that a Negro will sooner see his children emancipated than receive emancipation himself; and so far from the giving freedom to the children of Slaves being a cause to excite insurrection, there are instances innumerable of Slaves having preferred to give liberty to their children to taking it themselves. I mention this to prove that the Negroes are not what they have been unjustly represented, and also to prove that there can be no danger in emancipating the child before the parent; for it is one of the arguments adduced against us, that it would be dangerous to emancipate the child whilst the parent continues in slavery. When I mention this as a strong proof that no danger would ensue by emancipating the child before the parent, do not let me be misunderstood, do not let me be supposed to concede that the present generation are to be left in slavery—God forbid! I trust the time will come when Parliament will (for it can only be done by Parliament) take such wise, such prudent and religious measures as will secure to our fellow-subjects (for fellow-subjects they all are) the enjoyment of liberty, as well as ourselves. If we do not persevere in this object and these principles, we are not persevering in those principles which are the principles that have always actuated the British nation. What is our cause? It is the very same cause that gave liberty to this country. Every feeling that instigated Englishmen to fight for their liberty, and to form the Constitution under which we enjoy the blessings and the happiness we possess,—every feeling of that description exists in this great cause. One of the most painful things that has occurred to me for a long time, is to have heard it stated that it is impossible to teach

and to encourage religion for fear you should create a rebellion. Can there be any thing so monstrous and so horrible as to say, that for the sake of maintaining any one system of government, you are not to inculcate into the minds of human beings the doctrines of our holy religion; that you are to refuse to give them that glorious light which would make them at once good citizens and good Christians here below, and by which alone they can hope for salvation hereafter? Can any thing be so outrageous? Can any person hear these doctrines without shuddering and without determining to make every exertion to do away such a system?

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am afraid I have taken up too much of your time, I have only to add---that I trust you will all persevere in this great, this just cause, in which we must act with temper, but at the same time with zeal and firmness.

Almost every sentence of this speech was received with the most unbounded applause, and at the conclusion of it, the Meeting was adjourned.

## NOTE to page 85.

## MAJORITY AND MINORITY

On Mr. Brougham's Motion "That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, representing that this House, having taken into their most serious consideration the Papers laid before them relating to the Trial and Condemnation of the Rev. John Smith, a Missionary in the Colony of Demerara, deem it their duty now to declare, that they contemplate with serious alarm, and deep sorrow, the violation of Law and Justice which is manifest in those unexampled proceedings, and most earnestly pray that His Majesty will be graciously pleased to adopt such measures, as to his Royal wisdom may seem meet, for securing such a just and humane administration of Law, in that Colony, as may protect the voluntary Instructors of the Negroes, as well as the Negroes themselves, and the rest of his Majesty's subjects, from oppression."

## MINORITY.

Astley, Sir J. D.	Dundas, C.	Newman, R. W.
Abercomby, Hon. J.	Ebrington, Viscount	Normanby, Viscount.
Allen, J. H.	Evans, William	Nugent, Lord
Anson, Sir G.	Ellis, Hon. G. A.	Ord, W.
Acland, Sir Thomas	Ellison, Cuthbert	Oxmantown, Lord
Barham, J. F.	Fitzgerald, Rt. Hon. M.	Palmer, C.
Barrett, S. M.	Farraud, Robert	Palmer, C. F.
Benyon, Benj.	Fergusson, Sir R.	Pares, T.
Birch, Joseph	Fitzroy, Lord John	Pelham, C. F.
Brougham, Henry	Ford, M.	Philips, G.
Burdett, Sir Francis	Gaskill, B.	Powlett, Hon. W.
Bury, Viscount	Graham, S.	Proby, Hon. G. L.
Byng George	Grattan, James	Poyutz, W. J.
Belgrave, Viscount	Griffiths, J. W.	Parnell, Sir H.
Benet, John	Grosvenor, Hon. R.	Pryse, P.
Blake, Sir F.	Guise, Sir B. W.	Pym, F.
Boughton, Sir W.	Gurney, R. H.	Philips, G. R.
Butterworth, Joseph	Gordon, R.	Ramsden, J. C.
Brown, James	Heron, Sir R.	Roberts, Col.
Brownlow, Charles	Hobhouse, J. C.	Robinson, Sir G.
Calcraft, J.	Honywood, W. P.	Rowley, Sir W.
Calcraft, J. H.	Heygate, Ald.	Rumbold, C.
Calvert, C.	Hurst, R.	Russell, Lord G. W.
Calvert, N.	Hutchinson, Hon. H. C.	Rickford, W.
Carter, John	Henthcote, G. J.	Russell, Lord J.
Cavendish, Lord G.	Inglis, Sir R. H.	Ryder, Rt. Hon. R.
Caverdish, Charles	Johnes, J.	Rice, S.
Cavendish, Henry	Jervoise, G. P.	Scott, James
Chamberlayne, W.	Kemp, T. R.	Sebright, Sir J.
Chaloner, R.	Kennedy, J. F.	Sefton, Earl of
Clifton, Viscount	Knight, R.	Smith, A.
Coke, T. W. Jun.	Lambton, J. G.	Smith, John
Creevy, Thomas	Lennard, T. B.	Smith, G.
Cradock, Sheldon	Leycester, Ralph	Smith Sam.
Calthorpe, Hon. F.	Leader, W.	Smith, Hon. R.
Corbett, Panton	Lawley, T.	Smith Wm.
Davies, T. H.	Maberly, J.	Stanley, Hon. Ed.
Denison, W. J.	Macdonald, J.	Staunton, Sir G.
Denman, Thomas	Mackintosh, Sir. J.	Smyth, (Westmeath)
Duncannon, Viscount	Maddocks, W. A.	Townshend, Lord C.
Dundas, Hon. F.	Marjoribanks, S.	Tulk, C. A.
Davenport, D.	Monck, J. B.	Warre, J. A.
Dickenson, William	Maxwell, J.	Webb, Edward

Wilberforce, W.  
White, Colonel  
Williams, John  
Williams, Sir R.  
Williams, Wm.  
Wood, Alderman

Wrottesley, Sir J.  
Wodehouse, E.  
Wharton  
Whitmore, W.  
Wilson, Sir R.  
Wall, C. B.

Wilbraham, E. B.  
Whitbread, Samuel  
Whitbread, Wm.  
Wilson, W. C.  
Yorke, Sir Joseph

TELLERS.—T. F. Buxton, and Dr. Lushington.

#### PAIRED OFF.

Coke, T. W. (Norfolk)  
Grenfell, Pascoe  
Gurney, H.  
Milton, Visc.  
Mostyn, Sir T.

Money, W. T.  
Newport, Sir J.  
Price, R.  
Portman, E.  
Taylor, M. A.

Tavistock, Marquess  
Stewart, W. (Armagh)  
Stanley, Lord  
Hamilton, Lord  
Browne, Dom.

#### MAJORITY.

A'Court, Ed. H.  
Apsley, Lord  
Arbuthnot, Right Hon.  
Sir C.  
Alexander, J.  
Baillie, J.  
Bianing, Lord  
Browne, Rt. Hon. D.  
Bagwell, Rt. Hon. W.  
Bankes, Henry  
Burgh, Sir U.  
Bright, H.  
Bathurst, Hon. J.  
Brecknock, Earl of  
Bent, John  
Bentinck, Lord F.  
Byron, Thos.  
Bonham, H.  
Blair, James  
Bridges, G.  
Butler, Hon. C. H.  
Cockerell, Sir C.  
Cocks, James  
Crocker, J. W.  
Cholmeley, Sir M.  
Curzon, Hon. R.  
Chaplin, Charles  
Coote, Sir C.  
Calvert, John  
Congreve, Sir W.  
Cnst, Hon. E.  
Cooper, R. B.  
Clerk, Sir G.  
Coulburne, Sir G.  
Courtney, T. P.  
Collett, E. J.  
Corry, Viscount  
Clive, Viscount  
Clive, H.  
Clive, Hon. R.  
Cheere, C. M.  
Canning, Right Hon. G.  
Disbrowe, E. C.  
Deerhurst, Viscount

Denison, E.  
Davis, Hart  
Divett, T.  
Dawkins, H.  
Dundas, Right Hon. W.  
Duncombe, C.  
Dalrymple, A.  
Douglas, W. K.  
Dawson, J. H. M.  
Dawson, G. R.  
Dogherty, John  
Eastnor, Lord  
Ellis, C. R.  
Egerton, W.  
Estcourt, T.  
Ennismore, Lord  
Elliot, Lord  
East, Sir H.  
Fitzgerald, V.  
Forbes, C.  
Fox, G. L.  
Fane, T.  
Freemantle, W.  
Fane, Vere  
Foster, Leslie  
Grant, J. W.  
Grant, Right Hon. C.  
Green, Thos.  
Goulburn, Rt. Hon. H.  
Grant, A. C.  
Grossett, J. R.  
Gower, Lord F. L.  
Gordon, Hon. R.  
Greville, Sir C.  
Graves, Lord  
Gladstone, J.  
Hart, Gen.  
Hotham, Lord  
Hawkins, Sir C.  
Holmes, W.  
Hardinge, Sir H.  
Hodgson, Fred.  
Hodson, John  
Huise, Sir C.

Hill, Sir G.  
Herries, J. C.  
Howard, Hon. J. G.  
Holford, G.  
Handley, H.  
James, W.  
Irving, John  
Ingdis, John  
Jenkinson, Hon. C. C.  
Kerrison, Sir E.  
King, Hon. H.  
Lockhart, W. E.  
Lovaine, Lord  
Lewis, T. F.  
Lamb, Hon. W.  
Lowther, Lord  
Lowther, Hon. H.  
Lowther, John  
Lushington, S. R.  
Lester, E. L.  
Lloyd, J. Jones  
Long, Sir C.  
Lucy, G.  
Littleton, E.  
Lygon, Hon. H.  
Lowther, John, jun.  
Mildmay, P. St. John  
Morland, Sir G. B.  
Munday, G.  
Munday, F.  
Manning, W.  
Martin, R.  
Manners, Lord C.  
Macnaughton, A.  
Marjoribanks, Sir J.  
Morgan, C. G.  
Mackenzie, Sir J.  
Martin, Sir T. B.  
Murray, Sir G.  
Musgrave, Sir P.  
North, J. H.  
Onslow, A.  
Ommanney, Sir F.  
Paget, Berkeley

Peele, Wm.  
 Pennant, C. H. D.  
 Palmerston, Viscount  
 Porcher, Henry  
 Pollen, Sir J.  
 Pole, Sir Peter  
 Pollington, Viscount  
 Percy, Hon. W.  
 Pechell, Sir Thos.  
 Penruddock, J. H.  
 Phillimore, Jos  
 Prendergast, M G.  
 Peel, Right Hon. W.  
 Pearce, John  
 Ridley, Sir M. W.  
 Robertson, A.  
 Rae, Sir Wm.  
 Robinson, Rt. Hon. F.  
 Rowley, Sir Jos.  
 Ross, C.  
 Rogers, Ed.

Rose, Rt. Hon. Sir G.  
 Robarts, W. A.  
 Russell, Jesse W.  
 Stopford, Lord  
 Stuart, W. (Armagh)  
 Stuart, J. (Huntingdon)  
 Stuart, Alex.  
 Seymour, Horace  
 Shaw, Sir Robert  
 Somerset, Lord G.  
 Somerset, Lord E.  
 Shelley, Sir J.  
 Stanhope, Hon. J.  
 Sumner, G. H.  
 Sotherton, Frank  
 Shiffner, Sir G.  
 Tindale, N.  
 Twiss, Horace  
 Trench, F.  
 Trant, W. H.

Tudway, J. P.  
 Thompson, W.  
 Thompson, G. L.  
 Thynne, Lord H.  
 Thynne, Lord John  
 Uxbridge, Earl of  
 Valletort, Viscount  
 Wetherall, Sir C.  
 Wellesley, Richd.  
 Wortley, J. Stuart  
 Wodehouse, Hon. J.  
 Wilson, Thos.  
 Wallace, Right Hon. T.  
 Walker, J.  
 Wemyss, J.  
 Walpole, Hon. J.  
 Warrender, Right Hon.  
 Sir G.  
 Wynn, C. W. W.  
 Wigram, Sir R.

TELLERS—Sir J. C. Copley and R. Wilmot Horton.

PAIRED OFF.

Clive, Viscount  
 Brogden, J.  
 Townsend, Hon. H.  
 Macqueen, J.  
 Michel, J.

Williams, Owen  
 Williams, T. S.  
 Scarlett, J.  
 Graham, Sir J.

Knatchbull, Sir E.  
 Hope, Sir W.  
 Legge, Hon. F.  
 Gascoyne, General.

THE END.